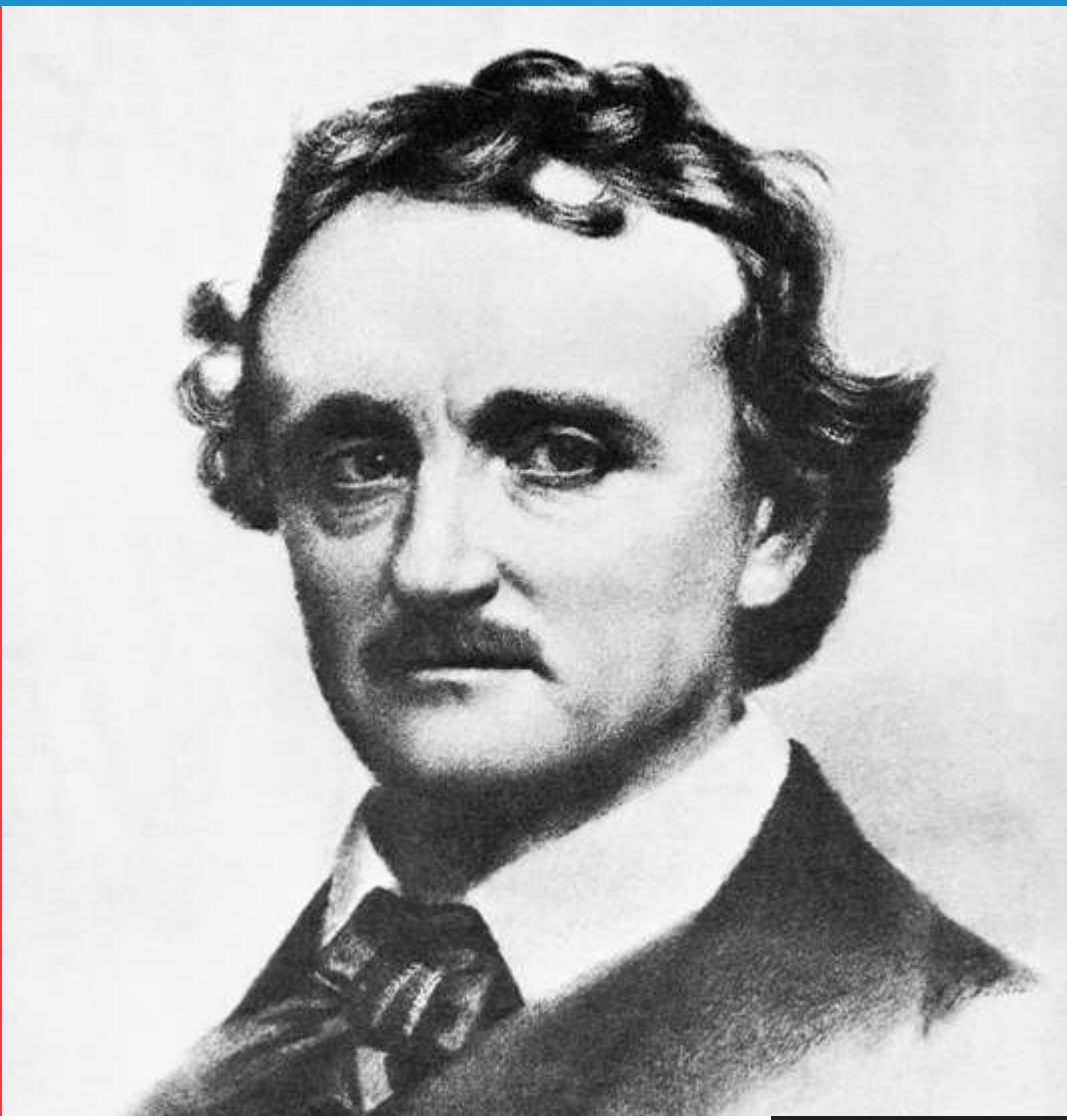
For students of English as a Foreign Language

Edgar Allan Poe: STORYTELLER

american literary classics



EDGAR ALLAN POE

Edgar Allan Poe:
STORYTELLER

Seven Stories
Adapted from
Edgar Allan Poe

A Ladder Edition at the 4,000-word level

Edgar Allan Poe: Storyteller

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The Ladder Series of books are specially prepared editions of well-known American books. They have been made easier to read for the enjoyment of readers for whom English is a second language.

The series is built on a "ladder" of five steps—from 1,000 to 5,000 different English words. The books have been shortened, but they keep the ideas, facts, and pleasures found in them by American readers.

This book uses words below the 4,000-word level. Some words in the book are above this step and will be found written in **boldface** letters. They are explained in the glossary at the back.

The publisher hopes the reader will enjoy this series while going up the ladder to more difficult reading.

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The Mask of the Red Death

THE RED DEATH HAD LONG BEEN FEEDING ON THE COUNTRY. NO sickness had ever been so **deadly** — so great a killer — or so **fearful** to see. Blood was its mark — the redness and the horror of blood. There were sharp pains, and a sudden feeling that the mind was rushing in circles inside the head. Then there was **bleeding** through the skin, though it was not cut or broken — and then, death! The bright red spots upon the body and especially upon the face of the sick man made other men turn away from him, afraid to try to help. And the sickness lasted, from the beginning to the end, no more than half an hour.

But Prospero, the **ruler** of that land, was happy and strong and wise. When half the people of his land had died, he called to him a thousand healthy, happy friends, and with them went far away to live in one of his **palaces**. This was a large and beautiful stone building he had planned himself. A strong, high wall circled it. This wall had gates of iron. The gentlemen, after they had entered, brought fire to heat the iron of the gates to make them close so **firmly** that nobody could open them. Here they could forget the sickness, the Red Death. They would leave the outside world to care for itself.

Prospero had supplied everything they needed for pleasure. There was music, there was dancing, there was beauty, there was food to eat and wine to drink. All these were within the wall, and within the wall they would be safe. Outside the wall walked the Red Death.

It was near the end of their fifth month there that Prospero asked his friends all to come together for a dancing party, a **masquerade**. Everyone was asked to come dressed in fine clothes and with his eyes, or perhaps his whole face, covered by a cloth mask.

It was a scene of great **richness**, that masquerade. There were seven rooms in which Prospero's friends danced. In many old palaces the doors can be opened in such a way that rooms like these seven can be seen all at the same time. In this palace it was different. Little more than one of them could be seen at one time. There was a turn every twenty or thirty yards. To the right and left, in the middle of each wall, was a tall pointed window. The windows were of colored glass, of the same color that was used in each room. The first room had blue cloth **hangings** on the walls — and blue were its windows. The second room had wall hangings of that blue-red known as purple, and here the windows were purple. The third was green, and so was the glass of the windows. The fourth had hangings and windows of yellow — the fifth of white — the sixth of **violet**. But the seventh room had hangings on the walls made of a rich soft cloth which was black, black as night, and the floor, too, was covered with the same heavy black cloth. In this room the color of the windows was not the same. It was red — a deep blood color.

All the rooms were lighted through the outside windows. The resulting light was strange indeed, as it colored the shapes of the dancers. But the light that fell on the black hangings through the

blood-colored glass was the most fearful of them all. It produced so wild a look on the faces of those who entered that there were few of the dancers who **dared** to step within those dark walls.

In this room stood a great clock of black wood. Gently it marked the seconds as they passed; and when it was time to mark the hour the clock spoke with a loud, clear voice, a deep tone as beautiful as music, but so strange that the music and the dancing stopped and the dancers stood still to listen. And then, after another sixty minutes, after another three thousand and six hundred seconds of Time, of flying Time, the clock struck again, and the dancers stopped as before.

Nevertheless, it was a happy and beautiful masquerade. And you may be sure that the clothes the dancers chose to wear, their **costumes**, were strange and wonderful. The dancers looked like the forms we might see in **troubled** dreams. And these — the dreams — danced softly through the rooms, taking the color of the rooms as they moved. It did not seem that their steps followed the music, but that the music rose from their steps. But into the seventh room the dancers do not go, for the red light coming through the windows, and the blackness of the wall hangings, make them afraid — and he who enters hears more deeply the striking of the great black clock.

But the other rooms are crowded, and in them beats **hotly** the heart of life. And the dance goes on until at last the clock begins to strike twelve. Again the music stopped. Again the dancers stood without moving while the slow striking sound continued. Before the clock was quiet again, many in the crowd saw that in the first room, the blue room, there was a **masquerader** who had not been seen before. As

they talked softly to each other about him a feeling of surprise spread through all the dancers, then a feeling of fear and of **sickening** horror.

In such a group as this, only a very strange masquerader could have caused such a feeling. Even among those who laugh at both life and death, some matters cannot be laughed at. Everyone seemed now deeply to feel that the stranger should not have been allowed to come among them dressed in such clothes. He was tall and very thin, and covered from head to foot like a dead man prepared for the **grave**. The mask which covered his face — or was it really a mask? — the mask which covered his face was so much like the face of a dead man that the nearest eye could not see the difference. And yet all this might have been acceptable — but the masquerader whom nobody knew had made himself look like the Red Death itself! His clothes were spotted with blood. And the mask over his face was covered with the terrible red spots…or perhaps it was indeed his face!

When Prospero looked upon this fearful form he was first filled with terror — and then with anger. "Who dares?" he cried. "Take him! **Seize** him! Pull off his mask so that we may know who we must hang at **sunrise**!"

Prospero stood in the blue room when he spoke these words. They sounded through the seven rooms, loud and clear. At first, as he spoke, some of the dancers started to rush toward the strange masquerader. But they stopped, afraid, and no one dared to put out a hand to touch him. The stranger started to walk toward the second room. He passed within a few feet of Prospero, who stood still, surprised. And while the dancers moved back from the center of the room, the stranger moved quietly, without being stopped, with a slow and measured step, through the blue room to the purple room — through the purple room to the green room — through the green to the yellow — through this to the white — and then to the violet room.

As the stranger was entering the seventh room, Prospero suddenly and angrily rushed through the six rooms. No one dared to follow him. He held a sharp knife high over his head, ready to strike the stranger. When he was within three or four feet of the strange masquerader, the stranger turned and stood silent, looking firmly into Prospero's eyes. There was a cry — and the knife dropped **shining** upon the black floor, upon which a minute later Prospero himself fell,

dead. The dancers then rushed into the black room. The strongest of the men tried to hold the masquerader, whose tall form stood beside the black clock; but when they put their hands on him they found inside the **grave-clothes** no human form, no body — nothing!

Now they knew that it was the Red Death itself that had come in the night. One by one the dancers fell, and each died as he fell. And the fires died. And the clock stopped. And darkness and **decay** and the Red Death ruled forever over all.

The Story of William Wilson

Part One

LET ME CALL MYSELF, FOR THE PRESENT, WILLIAM WILSON. THAT IS not my real name. That name has already been the cause of the horror — of the anger of my family. Have not the winds carried my name, with my loss of honor, to the ends of the earth? Am I not forever dead to the world? — to its honors, to its flowers, to its golden hopes? And a cloud, heavy and endless — does it not hang forever between my hopes and heaven?

Men usually become bad by degrees. But I let all goodness fall from me in a single moment, as if I had dropped a coat. From small acts of darkness I passed, in one great step, into the blackest evil ever known. Listen while I tell of the one cause that made this happen. Death is near, and its coming has softened my spirit. I desire, in passing through this dark valley, the understanding of other men. I wish them to believe that I have been, in some ways, in the power of forces beyond human control. I wish them to find for me, in the story I am about to tell, some small fact that proves I could have done only what I did. I would have them agree that what happened to me never happened to other men. Is it not true that no one has ever suffered as I do? Have I not indeed been living in a dream? And am I not now dying from the horror and the unanswered question — the mystery of the wildest dream ever dreamed on earth?

I am one of a family well known for their busy minds. As a small child I showed clearly that I too had the family character. As I became older it grew more powerful in me. For many reasons it became a cause of talk among friends, and the hurt it did me was great. I wanted people always to do things my way; I acted like a wild **fool**; I let my desires control me.

My father and mother, weak in body and mind, could do little to hold me back. When their efforts failed, of course my will grew stronger. From then on my voice in the house was law. At an age when few children are allowed to be free, I was left to be guided by my own desires. I became the master of my own actions.

I remember my first school. It was in a large house about three hundred years old, in a small town in England, among a great number of big trees. All of the houses there were very old. In truth, it was a dream-like and **spirit-quieting** place, that old town. At this moment I seem to feel the pleasant coolness under the shade of the trees, I remember the **sweetness** of the flowers, I hear again with **delight** I cannot explain the deep sound of the church bell each hour breaking the **stillness** of the day.

It gives me pleasure to think about this school — as much pleasure, perhaps, as I am now able to experience. Deep in suffering as I am — suffering only too real — perhaps no one will object if for a short time I forget my troubles and tell a little about this period. Moreover, the period and place are important. It was then and there that I first saw, hanging over me, the terrible promise of things to come. Let me remember.

The house where we boys lived and went to school was, as I have said, old and wide. The grounds about it were large, and there was a high wall around the outside of the whole school. Beyond this wall we went three times in each week, on one day to take short walks in the **neighboring** fields, and two times on Sunday to go to church. This was the one church in the village, and the head-teacher of our school was also the head of the church. With a spirit of deep wonder and of doubt I used to watch him there! This man, with slow step and quiet, **thoughtful** face, in clothes so different and **shining** clean — could this be the same man who with a hard face and clothes far from clean stood ready to strike us if we did not follow the rules of the school? Oh, great and terrible question, beyond my small power to answer!

I well remember our **playground**, which was behind the house. There were no trees, and the ground was as hard as stone. In front of the house there was a small garden, but we stepped into this garden only at very special times, such as when we first arrived at school, or when we left it for the last time, or perhaps when father or mother or a friend came to take us away for a few days.

But the house! — what a **delightful** old building it was — to me truly a **palace**! There was really no end to it. I was not always able to say certainly which of its two floors I happened to be on. From each room to every other there were always three or four steps either up or down. Then the rooms branched into each other, and these branches were too many to count, and often turned and came back upon themselves! Our ideas about the whole great house were not very far different from the thoughts we had about time without end. During the five years I was there, I could never have told anyone how to find the little room where I and some eighteen or twenty other boys slept. The schoolroom was the largest room in the house — and I couldn't help thinking it was the largest in the world. It was long and low, with pointed windows and heavy wood overhead. In a far corner was the office of our head-teacher, Mr. Bransby. This office had a thick door, and we would rather have died than open it when he was not there.

Inside the thick walls of this old school I passed my years from ten to fifteen. Yet I always found it interesting. A child's mind does not need the outside world. In the quiet school I found more bright pleasure than I found later, as a young man, in **riches**, or, as an older man, in **wrongdoing**.

Yet I must have been different indeed from most boys. Few men remember much of their early life. My early days stand out as clear and **plain** as if they had been cut in gold. In truth the **hotness** of my character and my desire to lead and command soon separated me from the others. Slowly I gained control over all who were not greatly

older than myself — over all except one. This exception was a boy who, though not of my family, had the same name as my own, William Wilson. This boy was the only one who ever **dared** to say he did not believe all I told him, and who would not follow my commands.

This **troubled** me greatly. I tried to make the others think that I didn't care. The truth was that I felt afraid of him. I had to fight to appear equal with him, but he easily kept himself equal with me. Yet no one else felt, as I did, that this proved him the better of the two.

Indeed, no one else saw the battle going on between us. All his attempts to stop me in what I wanted to do were made when no one else could see or hear us. He did not desire, as I did, to lead the other boys. He seemed only to want to hold me back. Sometimes with wonder, and always without pleasure, I saw that his manner seemed to show a kind of love for me. I did not feel thankful for this; I thought it meant only that he thought himself to be very fine indeed, better than me. Perhaps it was this love he showed for me, added to the fact that we had the same name, and also that we had entered the school on the same day, which made people say that we were brothers. Wilson did not belong to my family, even very **distantly**. But if we had been brothers we would have been near to each other indeed, for I learned that we were both born on the nineteenth of January, eighteen hundred and nine. This seemed a strange and wonderful thing.

The Story of William Wilson

Part Two

IN THE FIRST PART OF MY STORY I SPOKE ABOUT MY LIFE AT MY FIRST school, and about the other boys — over whom I gained firm control. But there was one boy who would not follow my commands, who would not do what I told him to, as the other boys did. His name was the same as mine — William Wilson — although he did not belong to my family in any way. He seemed to feel some love for me, and had entered the school the same day as I had. Many of the boys thought we were brothers. I soon discovered that we had been born on the same day: January nineteenth, eighteen hundred and nine.

Wilson continued his attempts to command me, while I continued my attempts to rule him. The strange thing is that, although I did not like him, I could not hate him. We had a battle nearly every day, it is true. In public it would seem that I had been proved the stronger; but he seemed somehow able to make me feel that this was not true, and that he himself was stronger. Nevertheless, we continued to talk to each other in a more or less friendly way. On a number of subjects we agreed very well. I sometimes thought that if we had met at another time and place we might have become friends.

It is not easy to explain my real feelings toward him. There was no love, and there was no fear. Yet I saw something to honor in him, and I wanted to learn more about him. Anyone experienced in human nature will not need to be told that Wilson and I were always together.

This strange appearance of friendship — although we were not friends — caused, no doubt, the **strangeness** of the battle between us. I tried to make the others laugh at him; I tried to give him pain while seeming to play a **lighthearted** game. My attempts were not always

successful, even though my plans were well made. There was much about his character that simply could not be laughed at.

I could find, indeed, but one weakness. Perhaps he had been born with it, or perhaps it had come from some illness. No one but me would have made any use of it against him. He was able to speak only in a very, very soft, low voice. This weakness I never failed to use in any way that was in my power.

Wilson could fight back, and he did. There was one way he had of troubling me beyond measure. I had never liked my name. Too many other people had the same name; I would rather have had a name that was not so often heard. The words **sickened** me. When, on the day I arrived at the school, a second William Wilson came also, I felt angry with him for having the name. I knew I would have to hear the name each day a double number of times. The other William Wilson would always be near. The other boys often thought that my actions and my **belongings** were his, and his were mine.

My anger grew stronger with every happening that showed that William Wilson and I were **alike**, in body or in mind. I had not then discovered the surprising fact that we were of the same age; but I saw that we were of the same height, and I saw that in form and in face we were also much the same. Nothing could trouble me more deeply (although I carefully tried to keep everyone from seeing it) than to hear anyone say anything about the **likeness** between us of mind, or of body, or of anything else. But, in truth, I had no reason to believe that this likeness was ever noticed by our **schoolfellows**. He saw it, and as clearly as I; that, I knew well. He discovered that in this likeness he could always find a way of troubling me. This proved the more than usual **sharpness** of his mind.

His method, which was to increase the likeness between us, lay both in words and in actions; and he followed his plan very well indeed. It was easy enough to have clothes like mine. He easily learned to walk and move as I did. His voice, of course, could not be as loud as mine, but he made his manner of speaking the same.

How greatly this most careful picture of myself troubled me, I will not now attempt to tell. It seemed that I was the only one who noticed it. I was the only one who saw Wilson's strange and knowing smiles. Pleased with having produced in my heart the desired result,

he seemed to laugh within himself and cared nothing that no one laughed with him.

I have already spoken of how he seemed to think he was better and wiser than I. He would try to guide me; he would often try to stop me from doing things I had planned. He would tell me what I should and should not do; and he would do this not **openly**, but in a word or two in which I had to look for the meaning. As I grew older I wanted less and less to listen to him.

As it was, I could not be happy under his eyes, that always watched me. Every day I showed more and more openly that I did not want to listen to anything he told me. I have said that, in the first years when we were in school together, my feelings might easily have been turned into friendship; but in the later months, although he talked to me less often then, I almost hated him.

Yet, let me be fair to him. I can remember no time when what he told me was not wiser than would be expected from one of his years. His sense of what was good or bad was sharper than my own. I might, today, be a better and happier man if I had more often done what he said.

It was about the same period, if I remember **rightly**, that by chance he acted more openly than usual and I discovered in his manner something that deeply interested me. Somehow he brought to mind pictures of my earliest years — I remembered, it seemed, things I could not have remembered. These pictures were wild, half-lighted, and not clear, but I felt that very long ago I must have known this person standing before me. This idea, however, passed as quickly as it had come.

It was on this same day that I had my last meeting at the school with this other, strange William Wilson. That night, when everyone was sleeping, I got out of bed, and with a light in my hand, I went quietly through the house to Wilson's room. I had long been thinking of another of those plans to hurt him, with which I had until then had little success. It was my purpose now to begin to act according to this new plan.

Having reached his room, I entered without a sound, leaving the light outside. I advanced a step, and listened. He was asleep. I turned, took the light, and again went to the bed. I looked down upon his face.

The **coldness** of ice filled my whole body. My knees **trembled**, my whole spirit was filled with horror. I moved the light nearer to his face. Was this — this the face of William Wilson? I saw indeed that it was, but I trembled as if with sickness as I imagined that it was not. What was there in his face to trouble me so? I looked, and my mind seemed to turn in circles in the rush of my thoughts. It was not like this — surely not like this — that he appeared in the daytime. The same name, the same body; the same day that we came to school! And then there was his use of my way of walking, my manner of speaking! Was it, in truth, **humanly** possible that what I now saw was the result — and the result only — of his continued efforts to be like me? Filled with wonder and fear, cold and trembling, I put out the light. In the quiet darkness I went from his room and, without waiting one minute, I left that old school and never entered it again.

The Story of William Wilson

Part Three

YOU WILL REMEMBER THAT IN THE LAST PART OF MY STORY I TOLD of my experiences in my first school; I spoke of my early meetings with a boy who looked and behaved as I did — whose name was even the same as mine: William Wilson. I told of the night when I went to Wilson's room, with a plan to hurt him. What I saw that night so **frightened** me that I left the room and the school forever. As I stood looking down at his sleeping form and face I might have been looking at myself in a looking glass.

It was not like this — surely not like this — that he appeared in the daytime. The same name, the same face, the same body, the same day of coming to school! And then his use of my way of walking, my manner of speaking! Was it, in truth, humanly possible that what I now saw was the result and the result only — of his continued efforts to be like me? Afraid, I left the old school and never entered it again.

After some months at home, doing nothing, I went to study at the famous school called Eton. I had partly forgotten my days at the other school, or at least my feelings about those days had changed. The truth — the terrible truth — of what had happened there was gone. Now I doubted what I remembered. Now I called the subject into my mind only to smile at the strength of the strange ideas and thoughts I had once had.

My life at Eton did not change this view. The fool's life into which I carelessly threw myself washed away everything that was valuable in my past. I do not wish, however, to tell here the story of my wrongdoing — wrongdoing which went against every law of the school and escaped the **watchful** eyes of all the teachers. Three years of this

had passed and I had grown much larger in body and smaller in soul. Three years of wrongdoing had made me evil.

One night I asked a group of friends who were as evil as I to come to a **secret** meeting in my room. We met at a late hour. There was strong drink, and there were games of cards and loud talking until the new day began appearing in the east. Warm with the wine and with the games of chance, I was raising my glass to drink in honor of some especially evil idea, when I heard the voice of a **servant** outside the room. He said that someone had asked to speak with me in another room.

I was **delighted**. A few steps brought me into the hall of the building. In this room no light was hanging. But I could see the form of a young man about my own height, wearing clothes like those I myself was wearing. His face I could not see. When I had entered he came quickly up to me, and, taking me by the arm, he said softly in my ear: "William Wilson!"

There was something in the manner of the stranger, and in the **trembling** of his **uplifted** finger, which made my eyes open wide; but it was not this which had so strongly touched my mind and heart. It was the sound of those two, simple, **well-known** words, William Wilson, which reached into my soul. Before I could think again and speak, he was gone.

For some weeks I thought about this happening. Who and what was this Wilson? — where did he come from? — and what were his purposes? I learned that for family reasons he had suddenly left the other school on the afternoon of the day I myself had left it. But in a short time I stopped thinking about the subject; I gave all my thought to plans for study at Oxford University.

There I soon went. My father and mother sent me enough money to live like the sons of the richest families in England. Now my nature showed itself with double force. I threw aside all honor. Among those who spent too much money, I spent more; and I added new forms of wrongdoing to the older ones already well-known at the university.

And I fell still lower. Although it may not be easily believed, it is a fact that I forgot my position as a gentleman. I learned and used all the evil ways of those men who live by playing cards. Like such skilled **gamblers**, I played to make money.

My friends trusted me, however. To them I was the laughing but honorable William Wilson, who freely gave gifts to anyone and everyone, who was young and who had some strange ideas, but who never did anything really bad.

For two years I was successful in this way. Then a young man came to the university, a young man named Glendinning, who, people said, had quickly and easily become very rich. I soon found him of weak mind. This, of course, made it easy for me to get his money by playing cards. I played with him often.

At first, with the gambler's usual skill, I let him take money from me. Then my plans were ready. I met him one night in the room of another friend, Mr. Preston. A group of eight or ten persons were there. By my careful planning I made it seem that it was chance that started us playing cards. In fact, it was Glendinning himself who first spoke of a card game.

We sat and played far into the night, and at last the others stopped playing. Glendinning and I played by ourselves, while the others watched. The game was the one I liked best, a game called "écarté." Glendinning played with a wild **nervousness** that I could not understand, though it was caused partly, I thought, by all the wine he had been drinking. In a very short time he had lost a great amount of money to me.

Now he wanted to double the amount for which we played. This was as I had planned, but I made it seem that I did not want to agree. At last I said yes. In an hour he had lost four times as much money as before.

For some reason his face had become white. I had thought him so rich that losing money would not trouble him, and I believed this whiteness, this paleness, was the result of drinking too much wine. Now, fearing what my friends might say about me, I was about to stop the game when his broken cry and the wild look in his eyes made me understand that he had lost everything he owned. Weak of mind and made weaker by wine, he should never have been allowed to play that night. But I had not stopped him; I had used his condition to destroy him.

The room was very quiet. I could feel the **icy** coldness in my friends. What I would have done I cannot say, for at that moment the wide heavy doors of the room were suddenly opened. Every light in the room went out, but I had seen that a man had entered; he was about my own height, and he was wearing a very fine, long coat. The darkness, however, was now complete, and we could only feel that he was standing among us. Then we heard his voice. In a soft, low, **never-to-be-forgotten** voice, which I felt deep in my bones, he said:

"Gentlemen, I am here only to do my duty. You cannot know the true character of the man who has tonight taken a large amount of money from Mr. Glendinning. Please have him take off his coat, and then, look in it very carefully."

While he was speaking there was not another sound in the room. And as he ended, he was gone!

The Story of William Wilson

Part Four

AS I ENDED THE LAST PART OF my story, I was speaking of that terrible evening when I played cards with a young gentleman called Glendinning. We were in the room of one of my friends at Oxford University. I had just realized that the young man, weak of mind and **weakened** by wine, had allowed me to win from him everything he owned. I was still trying to decide what I should do, when, as I said…

The wide, heavy doors of the room were suddenly opened. Every light in the room went out; but I had seen that a stranger had entered; he was about my own height, and he was wearing a very fine, long coat. The darkness, however, was now complete; and we could only feel that he was standing among us. Then we heard him speak. In a soft, low, and never-to-be-forgotten voice, which I felt deep in my heart, he said: "Gentlemen, I am here only to do my duty. You cannot know the true character of the man who has tonight taken a large amount of money from Mr. Glendinning. Please have him take off his coat, and then look in it very carefully."

While he was speaking there was not another sound in the room. As he ended, he was gone.

Can I — shall I — tell what I felt? Need I say that I was afraid, that I felt the sick fear of those who are judged forever **wrong**? Many hands held me. Lights were brought. My friends looked in my coat. In it they found all the high cards, the valuable cards needed to win in the game we had been playing. **Secretly** using these cards, I could have taken the money of anyone who played the game with me. Mr. Preston, in whose room we were, then said: "Mr. Wilson, this is yours." He lifted from the floor a fine, warm coat, and said, "We shall not look in this to prove again what we have proved already. We have seen enough. You will understand, I hope, the need for you to leave the University. At the very least, you must leave my room, and leave it now."

Down in the dust though my spirit was, I might have tried to strike him for those words if at that moment I had not noticed something very surprising. My coat had cost more money than most men could spend, and it had been made especially for me. It was different, I thought, from every other coat in the world. When, therefore, Mr. Preston gave me the coat which he had picked up from the floor, I saw with terror that my own was already hanging on my arm, and that the two were alike in every way. I remembered that the strange being who had so **mysteriously** entered and left the room had had a coat. No one else in the group had been wearing one. I placed the coat offered by Preston over my own, and left his room.

The next morning I began a **hurried** journey away from Oxford University. I ran, but I could not escape. I went from city to city, and in each one Wilson appeared. Paris, Rome, Vienna, Berlin, Moscow — he followed me everywhere. Years passed. I went to the very ends of the earth. I ran in fear, as if running from a terrible sickness, and still he followed. Again and again I asked myself, "Who is he? — where did he come from? — and what is his purpose?" But no answer was found. And then I looked with the greatest care at the methods of his watch over me. I learned little. It was **noticeable**, indeed, that when he appeared now, it was only to stop me in those actions from which evil might result. But what right did he have to try to control me?

I also noticed that although he always wore clothes the same as mine, he no longer let me see his face. Did he think I would not know him? He destroyed my honor at Oxford, he stopped me in my plans

for getting a high position in Rome, in my love in Naples, in what he called my desire for too much money in Egypt. Did he think I could fail to see that he was the William Wilson of my schoolboy days, the hated and feared William Wilson? But let me **hurry** to the last scene in my story.

Until now I had not tried to strike back. He was honorable and wise, he could be everywhere, and he knew everything. I felt such wonder and fear of him that I believed myself to be weak and helpless. Though it made me angry, I had done as he desired. But now I wanted more and more to escape his control. As I began to grow stronger, it seemed to me that he began to grow weaker. I felt a burning hope; in my **deepest** thoughts I decided that I was going to be free.

It was at Rome, during the Carnival of 1835, that I went to a dance in the great house of the Duke Di Broglio. I had been drinking more wine than is usual, and the rooms seemed very crowded and hot. I became angry as I pushed through the people. I was looking (Let me not say why)…I was looking for the young, the laughing, the beautiful wife of old Di Broglio. Suddenly I saw her; but as I was trying to get through the crowd to join her, I felt a hand placed upon my shoulder, and that **ever-remembered** quiet voice within my ear.

In a wild anger I took him in a strong hold. Wilson was dressed, as I had expected, like myself, in a rich coat of blue. Around his body was a band of red cloth from which hung a long sharp **sword**. A mask of black cloth completely covered his face.

"You again!" I cried, my anger growing hotter with each word. "Always you again! You shall not — you shall not hunt me like this until I die! Come with me now or I will kill you where you stand." I pulled him after me into a small room nearby. I threw him against the wall and closed the door. I commanded him to take his sword in his hand. After a moment, he took it and stood waiting, ready to fight.

The fight was short indeed. I was wild with hate and anger; in my arm I felt the strength of a thousand men. In a few moments I had forced him back against the wall, and he was in my power. Quickly, **wildly**, I put my sword's point again and again into his heart.

At that moment I heard that someone was trying to open the door. I hurried to close it **firmly**, and then turned back to my dying enemy. But what human words can tell the surprise, the horror which

filled me at the scene I then saw?! The moment in which I had turned to close the door had been long enough, it seemed, for a great change to come at the far end of the room. A large mirror — a looking glass — or so it seemed to me — now stood where it had not been before. As I walked toward it in terror I saw my own form, all spotted with blood, its face white, advancing to meet me with a weak and uncertain step.

So it appeared, I say, but was not. It was my enemy — it was Wilson, who then stood before me in the pains of death. His mask and coat lay upon the floor. In his dress and in his face there was nothing which was not my own!

It was Wilson; but now it was my own voice I heard, as he said: "I have lost. Yet from now on you are also dead — dead to the World, dead to Heaven, dead to Hope! In me you lived — and, in my death — see by this face, which is your own, how **wholly**, how completely, you have killed — yourself!"

The Fall of the House of Usher

Part One

IT WAS A DARK AND SOUNDLESS day near the end of the year, and clouds were hanging low in the heavens. All day I had been riding on **horseback** through country with little life or beauty; and in the early evening I came within view of the House of Usher.

I do not know how it was — but, with my first sight of the building, a sense of heavy sadness filled my spirit. I looked at the scene before me — at the house itself — at the ground around it — at the cold stone walls of the building — at its empty eye-like windows — and at a few dead trees — I looked at this scene, I say, with a complete sadness of soul which was no healthy, **earthly** feeling. There was a **coldness**, a **sickening** of the heart, in which I could discover nothing to **lighten** the weight I felt. What was it, I asked myself, what was it that was so **fearful**, so **frightening** in my view of the House of Usher? This was a question to which I could find no answer.

I stopped my horse beside the building, on the edge of a dark and quiet lake. There, I could see reflected in the water a clear picture of the dead trees, and of the house and its empty eye-like windows.

I was now going to spend several weeks in this house of sadness — this house of **gloom**. Its owner was named Roderick Usher. We had been friends when we were boys; but many years had passed since our last meeting. A letter from him had reached me, a wild letter which demanded that I reply by coming to see him. He wrote of an illness of the body — of a sickness of the mind — and of a desire to see me — his best and indeed his only friend. It was the manner in which all this was said — it was the heart in it — which did not allow me to say no.

Although as boys we had been together, I really knew little about my friend. I knew, however, that his family, a very old one, had long been famous for its understanding of all the arts and for many quiet acts of kindness to the poor. I had learned too that the family had never been a large one, with many branches. The name had passed always from father to son, and when people spoke of the "House of Usher," they included both the family and the family home.

I again looked up from the picture of the house reflected in the lake to the house itself. A strange idea grew in my mind — an idea so strange that I tell it only to show the force of the feelings which laid their weight on me. I really believed that around the whole house, and the ground around it, the air itself was different. It was not the air of heaven. It rose from the dead, **decaying** trees, from the gray walls, and the quiet lake. It was a **sickly**, **unhealthy** air that I could see, slow-moving, heavy, and gray.

Shaking off from my spirit what must have been a dream, I looked more carefully at the building itself. The most **noticeable** thing about it seemed to be its great age. None of the walls had fallen, yet the stones appeared to be in a condition of advanced **decay**. Perhaps the careful eye would have discovered the beginning of a break in the front of the building, a crack making its way from the top down the wall until it became lost in the dark waters of the lake.

I rode over a short bridge to the house. A man who worked in the house — a **servant** — took my horse, and I entered. Another servant, of quiet step, led me without a word through many dark **turnings** to the room of his master. Much that I met on the way added, I do not know how, to the **strangeness** of which I have already spoken. While the objects around me — the dark wall **coverings**, the blackness of the floors, and the things brought home from long forgotten wars —

while these things were like the things I had known since I was a baby — while I admitted that all this was only what I had expected — I was still surprised at the strange ideas which grew in my mind from these simple things.

The room I came into was very large and high. The windows were high, and pointed at the top, and so far above the black floor that they were quite out of reach. Only a little light, red in color, made its way through the glass, and served to lighten the nearer and larger objects. My eyes, however, tried and failed to see into the far, high corners of the room. Dark coverings hung upon the walls. The many chairs and tables had been used for a long, long time. Books lay around the room, but could give it no sense of life. I felt sadness hanging over everything. No escape from this deep cold gloom seemed possible.

As I entered the room, Usher stood up from where he had been lying and met me with a **warmth** which at first I could not believe was real. A look, however, at his face told me that every word he spoke was true.

We sat down; and for some moments, while he said nothing, I looked at him with a feeling of sad surprise. Surely, no man had ever before changed as Roderick Usher had! Could this be the friend of my early years? It is true that his face had always been unusual. He had gray-white skin; eyes large and full of light; lips not bright in color, but of a beautiful shape; a **well-shaped** nose; hair of great softness — a face that was not easy to forget. And now the increase in this strangeness of his face had caused so great a change that I almost did not know him. The horrible white of his skin, and the strange light in his eyes, surprised me and even made me afraid. His hair had been allowed to grow, and in its softness it did not fall around his face but seemed to lie upon the air. I could not, even with an effort, see in my friend the appearance of a simple human being.

In his manner, I saw at once, changes came and went; and I soon found that this resulted from his attempt to quiet a very great **nervousness**. I had indeed been prepared for something like this, partly by his letter and partly by remembering him as a boy. His actions were first too quick and then too quiet. Sometimes his voice, slow and **trembling** with fear, quickly changed to a strong, heavy, carefully spaced, too perfectly controlled manner. It was in this manner that he

spoke of the purpose of my visit, of his desire to see me, and of the deep **delight** and strength he expected me to give him. He told me what he believed to be the nature of his illness. It was, he said, a family sickness, and one from which he could not hope to grow better — but it was, he added at once, only a nervous illness which would without doubt soon pass away. It showed itself in a number of strange feelings. Some of these, as he told me of them, interested me but were beyond my understanding; perhaps the way in which he told me of them added to their strangeness. He suffered much from a sickly increase in the feeling of all the senses; he could eat only the most tasteless food; all flowers smelled too strongly for his nose; his eyes were hurt by even a little light; and there were few sounds which did not fill him with horror. A certain kind of sick fear was completely his master.

"I shall die," he said. "I shall die! I must die of this **fool's** sickness. In this way, this way and no other way, I shall be lost. I fear what will happen in the future, not for what happens, but for the result of what happens. I have, indeed, no fear of pain, but only fear of its result — of terror! I feel that the time will soon arrive when I must lose my life, and my mind, and my soul, together, in some last battle with that horrible enemy: FEAR!"

The Fall of the House of Usher

Part Two

RODERICK USHER, WHOM I HAD known as a boy, was now ill and had asked me to come to help him. When I arrived I felt something strange and fearful about the great old stone house, about the lake in front of it, and about Usher himself. He appeared not like a human being, but like a spirit that had come back from beyond the **grave**. It was an illness, he said, from which he would surely die. He called his sickness fear. "I have," he said, "no fear of pain, but only the fear of its result — of terror. I feel that the time will soon arrive when I must lose my life, and my mind, and my soul, together, in some last battle with that horrible enemy: FEAR!"

I learned also, but slowly, and through broken words with doubtful meaning, another strange fact about the condition of Usher's mind. He had certain sick fears about the house in which he lived, and he had not stepped out of it for many years. He felt that the house, with its gray walls and the quiet lake around it, had somehow through the long years gotten a strong hold on his spirit.

He said, however, that much of the gloom which lay so heavily on him was probably caused by something more **plainly** to be seen — by the **long-continued** illness — indeed, the coming death — of a **dearly** loved sister — his only company for many years. Except for himself, she was the last member of his family on earth. "When she dies," he said, with a sadness which I can never forget, "when she dies, I will be the last of the old, old family — the House of Usher."

While he spoke, the lady Madeline (for so she was called) passed slowly through a distant part of the room, and without seeing that I was there, went on. I looked at her with a complete and wondering surprise and with some fear — and yet I found I could not explain to myself such feelings. My eyes followed her. When she came to a door and it closed behind her, my eyes turned to the face of her brother — but he had put his face in his hands, and I could see only that the thin fingers through which his tears were flowing were whiter than ever before.

The illness of the lady Madeline had long been beyond the help of her doctors. She seemed to care about nothing. Slowly her body had grown thin and weak, and often for a short period she would fall into a sleep like the sleep of the dead. So far she had not been forced to stay in bed; but by the evening of the day I arrived at the house, the power of her **destroyer** (as her brother told me that night) was too strong for her. I learned that my one sight of her would probably be the last I would have — that the lady, at least while living, would be seen by me no more.

For several days following, her name was not spoken by either Usher or myself; and during this period I was busy with efforts to lift my friend out of his sadness and gloom. We painted and read together; or listened, as if in a dream, to the wild music he played. And so, as a warmer and more loving friendship grew between us, I saw more clearly the **uselessness** of all attempts to bring happiness to a mind from which only darkness came, spreading upon all objects in the world its **never-ending** gloom.

I shall always remember the hours I spent with the master of the House of Usher. Yet I would fail in any attempt to give an idea of the true character of the things we did together. There was a strange light over everything. The paintings which he made made me **tremble**,

though I know not why. To tell of them is beyond the power of written words. If ever a man painted an idea, that man was Roderick Usher. For me at least there came out of his pictures a sense of fear and wonder.

One of these pictures may be told, although **weakly**, in words. It showed the inside of a room where the dead might be placed, with low walls, white and **plain**. It seemed to be very deep under the earth. There was no door, no window; and no light or fire burned; yet a river of light flowed through it, filling it with a horrible, **ghastly** brightness.

I have spoken of that **sickly** condition of the senses, which made most music painful for Usher to hear. The notes he could listen to with pleasure were very few. It was this fact, perhaps, that made the music he played so different from most music. But the wild beauty of his playing could not be explained.

The words of one of his songs, called "The Haunted **Palace**," I have easily remembered. In it I thought I saw, and for the first time, that Usher knew very well that his mind was **weakening**. This song told of a great house where a king lived — a palace — in a green valley, where all was light and color and beauty, and the air was sweet. In the palace were two bright windows through which people in that happy valley could hear music and could see smiling ghosts — spirits — moving around the king. The palace door was of the richest materials, in red and white; through it came other spirits whose only duty was to sing in their beautiful voices about how wise their king was.

But a dark change came, the song continued, and now those who enter the valley see through the windows, in a red light, shapes that move to broken music; while through the door, now colorless, a ghastly river of ghosts, laughing but no longer smiling, rushes out forever.

Our talk of this song led to another strange idea in Usher's mind. He believed that plants could feel and think, and not only plants, but rocks and water as well. He believed that the gray stones of his house, and the small plants growing on the stones, and the decaying trees, had a power over him that made him what he was.

Our books — the books which, for years, had fed the sick man's mind — were, as might be supposed, of this same wild character. Some of these books Usher sat and studied for hours. His chief delight was found in reading one very old book, written for some forgotten church, telling of the Watch over the Dead.

At last, one evening he told me that the lady Madeline was alive no more. He said he was going to keep her body for a time in one of the many **vaults** inside the walls of the building. The **worldly** reason he gave for this was one with which I felt I had to agree. He had decided to do this because of the nature of her illness, because of the strange interest and questions of her doctors, and because of the great distance to the **graveyard** where members of his family were placed in the earth.

We two carried her body to its resting place. The vault in which we placed it was small and dark, and in ages past it must have seen strange and bloody scenes. It lay deep below that part of the building where I myself slept. The thick door was of iron, and because of its great weight made a loud, hard sound when it was opened and closed.

As we placed the lady Madeline in this room of horror I saw for the first time the great **likeness** between brother and sister, and Usher told me then that they were twins — they had been born on the same day. For that reason the understanding between them had always been great, and the tie that held them together very strong.

We looked down at the dead face one last time, and I was filled with wonder. As she lay there, the lady Madeline looked not dead but asleep — still soft and warm — though to the touch cold as the stones around us.

The Fall of the House of Usher

Part Three

I WAS VISITING AN OLD FRIEND of mine, Roderick Usher, in his old stone house, his palace, where a feeling of death hung on the air. I saw how fear was pressing on his heart and mind. Now his only sister, the lady Madeline, had died and we had put her body in its resting place, in a room inside the cold walls of the palace, a **damp**, dark vault, a fearful place. As we looked down upon her face, I saw that there was a strong likeness between the two. "Indeed," said Usher, "we were born on the same day, and the tie between us has always been strong."

We did not long look down at her, for fear and wonder filled our hearts. There was still a little color in her face and there seemed to be a smile on her lips. We closed the heavy iron door and returned to the rooms above, which were hardly less **gloomy** than the vault.

And now a change came in the sickness of my friend's mind. He went from room to room with a **hurried** step. His face was, if possible, whiter and more ghastly than before, and the light in his eyes had

gone. The **trembling** in his voice seemed to show the greatest fear. At times he sat looking at nothing for hours, as if listening to some sound I could not hear. I felt his condition, slowly but certainly, gaining power over me; I felt that his wild ideas were becoming fixed in my own mind.

As I was going to bed late in the night of the seventh or eighth day after we placed the lady Madeline within the vault, I experienced the full power of such feelings. Sleep did not come — while the hours passed. My mind fought against the nervousness. I tried to believe that much, if not all, of what I felt was due to the gloomy room, to the dark wall coverings, which in a rising wind moved on the walls. But my efforts were **useless**. A trembling I could not stop filled my body, and fear without reason caught my heart. I sat up, looking into the darkness of my room, listening — I do not know why — to certain low sounds which came when the storm was quiet. A feeling of horror lay upon me like a heavy weight. I put on my clothes and began walking **nervously** around the room.

I had been walking for a very short time when I heard a light step coming toward my door. I knew it was Usher. In a moment I saw him at my door, as usual very white, but there was a wild laugh in his eyes. Even so, I was glad to have his company. "And have you not seen it?" he said. He **hurried** to one of the windows and opened it to the storm.

The force of the entering wind nearly lifted us from our feet. It was, indeed, a **stormy** but beautiful night, and **wildly** strange. The heavy, **low-hanging** clouds which seemed to press down upon the house, flew from all directions against each other, always returning and never passing away in the distance. With their great thickness they cut off all light from the moon and the stars. But we could see them because they were lighted from below by the air itself, which we could see, rising from the dark lake and from the stones of the house itself.

"You must not — you shall not look out at this!" I said to Usher, as I led him from the window to a seat. "This appearance which surprises you so has been seen in other places, too. Perhaps the lake is the cause. Let us close this window; the air is cold. Here is one of the stories you like best. I will read and you shall listen and thus we will live through this fearful night together."

The old book which I had picked up was one written by a fool for fools to read, and it was not, in truth, one that Usher liked. It was, however, the only one within easy reach. He seemed to listen quietly. Then I came to a part of the story in which a man, a strong man full of wine, begins to break down a door, and the sound of the dry wood as it breaks can be heard through all the forest around him.

Here I stopped, for it seemed to me that from some very distant part of the house sounds came to my ears like those of which I had been reading. It must have been this likeness that had made me notice them, for the sounds themselves, with the storm still increasing, were nothing to stop or interest me.

I continued the story, and read how the man, now entering through the broken door, discovers a strange and terrible animal of the kind so often found in these old stories. He strikes it and it falls, with such a cry that he has to close his ears with his hands. Here again I stopped.

There could be no doubt. This time I did hear a distant sound, very much like the cry of the animal in the story. I tried to control myself so that my friend would see nothing of what I felt. I was not certain that he had heard the sound, although he had clearly changed in some way. He had slowly moved his chair so that I could not see him well. I did see that his lips were moving as if he were speaking to himself. His head had dropped forward, but I knew he was not asleep, for his eyes were open and he was moving his body from side to side.

I began reading again, and quickly came to a part of the story where a heavy piece of iron falls on a stone floor with a ringing sound. These words had just passed my lips when I heard clearly, but from far away, a loud ringing sound — as if something of iron had indeed fallen heavily upon a stone floor, or as if an iron door had closed.

I lost control of myself completely, and jumped up from my chair. Usher still sat, moving a little from side to side. His eyes were turned to the floor. I rushed to his chair. As I placed my hand on his shoulder, I felt that his whole body was trembling; a sickly smile touched his lips; he spoke in a low, quick, and nervous voice as if he did not know I was there.

"Yes!" he said. "I heard it! Many minutes, many hours, many days have I heard it — but I did not **dare** to speak! We have put her living in the vault! Did I not say that my senses were too strong? I heard her first movements many days ago — yet I did not dare to speak! And now, that story — but the sounds were hers! Oh, where shall I run?! She is coming — coming to ask why I put her there too soon. I hear her **footsteps** on the stairs. I hear the heavy beating of her heart." Here he jumped up and cried as if he were giving up his soul: "I TELL YOU, SHE NOW STANDS AT THE DOOR!!"

The great door to which he was pointing now slowly opened. It was the work of the rushing wind, perhaps — but no — outside that door a shape did stand, the tall figure, in its **grave-clothes**, of the lady Madeline of Usher. There was blood upon her white dress, and the signs of her terrible efforts to escape were upon every part of her thin form. For a moment she remained trembling at the door; then, with a low cry, she fell heavily in upon her brother; in her pain, as she died at last, she carried him down with her, down to the floor. He too was dead, killed by his own fear.

I rushed from the room; I rushed from the house. I ran. The storm was around me in all its strength as I crossed the bridge. Suddenly a wild light moved along the ground at my feet, and I turned to see where it could have come from, for only the great house and its darkness were behind me. The light was that of the full moon, of a blood-red moon, which was now **shining** through that break in the front wall, that crack which I thought I had seen when I first saw the palace. Then only a little crack, it now **widened** as I watched. A strong wind came rushing over me — the whole face of the moon appeared. I saw the great walls falling apart. There was a long and stormy shouting sound — and the deep black lake closed darkly over all that remained of the HOUSE OF USHER.

The Black Cat

TOMORROW I DIE. TOMORROW I die, and today I want to tell the world what happened and thus perhaps free my soul from the horrible weight which lies upon it.

But listen! Listen, and you shall hear how I have been destroyed.

When I was a child I had a natural goodness of soul which led me to love animals — all kinds of animals, but especially those animals we call pets, animals which have learned to live with men and share their homes with them. There is something in the love of these animals which speaks directly to the heart of the man who has learned from experience how uncertain and **changeable** is the love of other men.

I was quite young when I married. You will understand the joy I felt to find that my wife shared with me my love for animals. Quickly she got for us several pets of the most likeable kind. We had birds, some **goldfish**, a fine dog, and a cat.

The cat was a beautiful animal, of unusually large size, and entirely black. I named the cat Pluto, and it was the pet I liked best.

I alone fed it, and it followed me all around the house. It was even with difficulty that I stopped it from following me through the streets.

Our friendship lasted, in this manner, for several years, during which, however, my own character became greatly changed. I began to drink too much wine and other strong drinks. As the days passed I became less loving in my manner; I became quick to anger; I forgot how to smile and laugh. My wife — yes, and my pets, too, all except the cat — were made to feel the change in my character.

One night I came home quite late from the **inn**, where I now spent more and more time drinking. Walking with uncertain step, I made my way with effort into the house. As I entered I saw — or thought I saw — that Pluto, the cat, was trying to stay out of my way, to avoid me. This action, by an animal which I had thought still loved me, made me angry beyond reason. My soul seemed to fly from my body. I took a small knife out of my coat and opened it. Then I took the poor animal by the neck and with one quick movement I cut out one of its fear-filled eyes!

Slowly the cat got well. The hole where its eye had been was not a pretty thing to look at, it is true; but the cat no longer appeared to suffer any pain. As might be expected, however, it ran from me in fear whenever I came near. Why should it not run? Yet this did not fail to anger me. I felt growing inside myself a new feeling. Who has not, a hundred times, found himself doing **wrong**, doing some evil thing for no other reason than because he knows he should not? Are not we humans at all times pushed, ever driven in some unknown way to break the law just because we understand it to be the law?

One day, in cold blood, I tied a strong rope around the cat's neck, and taking it down into the **cellar** under the house I hung it from one of the wood **beams** above my head. I hung it there until it was dead. I hung it there with tears in my eyes, I hung it because I knew it had loved me, because I felt it had given me no reason to hurt it, because I knew that my doing so was a wrong so great, a sin so **deadly** that it would place my soul forever outside the reach of the love of God!

That same night, as I lay sleeping, I heard through my open window the cries of our neighbors. I jumped from my bed and found that the entire house was filled with fire. It was only with great difficulty that my wife and I escaped. And when we were out of the house, all we

could do was stand and watch it burn to the ground. I thought of the cat as I watched it burn, the cat whose dead body I had left hanging in the cellar. It seemed almost that the cat had in some **mysterious** way caused the house to burn so that it could make me pay for my evil act, so that it could take **revenge** upon me.

Months went by, and I could not drive the thought of the cat out of my mind. One night I sat in the inn, drinking, as usual. In the corner I saw a dark object that I had not seen before. I went over to see what it could be. It was a cat, a cat almost exactly like Pluto. I touched it with my hand and **petted** it, passing my hand softly along its back. The cat rose and pushed its back against my hand.

Suddenly I realized that I wanted the cat. I offered to buy it from the **innkeeper**, but he claimed he had never seen the animal before. As I left the inn, it followed me, and I allowed it to do so. It soon became a pet of both my wife and myself.

The morning after I brought it home, however, I discovered that this cat, like Pluto, had only one eye. How was it possible that I had not noticed this the night before? This fact only made my wife love the cat more. But I, myself, found a feeling of dislike growing in me. My growing dislike of the animal only seemed to increase its love for me. It followed me, followed me everywhere, always. When I sat, it lay down under my chair. When I stood up it got between my feet and nearly made me fall. Wherever I went, it was always there. At night I dreamed of it. And I began to hate that cat!

One day my wife called to me from the cellar of the old

building where we were now forced to live. As I went down the stairs, the cat, following me as always, ran under my feet and nearly threw me down.

In sudden anger, I took a knife and struck **wildly** at the cat. Quickly my wife put out her hand and stopped my arm. This only increased my anger and, without thinking, I turned and put the knife's point deep into her heart! She fell to the floor and died without a sound.

I spent a few moments looking for the cat, but it was gone. And I had other things to do, for I knew I must do something with the body, and quickly. Suddenly I noted a place in the wall of the cellar where stones had been added to the wall to cover an old **fireplace** which was no longer wanted. The walls were not very strongly built, and I found I could easily take down those stones. Behind them there was, as I knew there must be, a hole just big enough to hold the body. With much effort I put the body in and carefully put the stones back in their place. I was pleased to see that it was quite impossible for anyone to know that a single stone had been moved.

Days passed. Still there was no cat. A few people came and asked about my wife; but I answered them easily. Then one day several officers of the police came. Certain that they could find nothing, I asked them in and went with them as they searched.

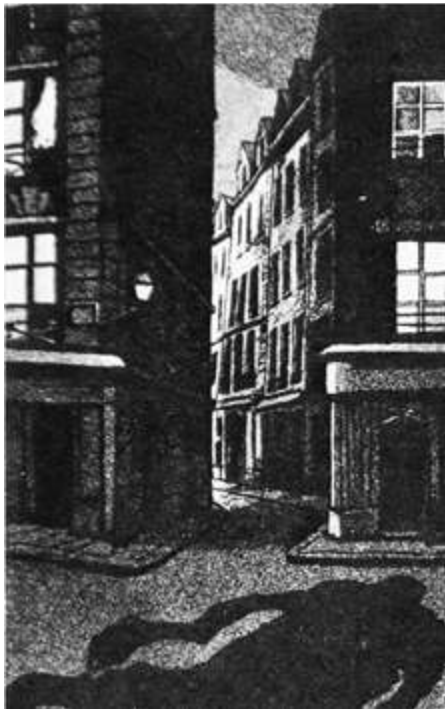
Finally they searched the cellar from end to end. I watched them quietly, and, as I expected, they noticed nothing. But as they started up the stairs again, I felt myself driven by some unknown inner force to let them know, to make them know, that I had won the battle.

"The walls of this building," I said, "are very strongly built; it is a fine old house." And as I spoke I struck with my stick that very place in the wall behind which was the body of my wife. Immediately I felt a cold feeling up and down my back as we heard coming out of the wall itself a horrible cry.

For one short moment the officers stood looking at each other. Then quickly they began to pick at the stones, and in a short time they saw before them the body of my wife, black with dried blood and smelling of **decay**. On the body's head, its one eye filled with fire, its wide open mouth the color of blood, sat the cat, crying out its revenge!

The Murders in the Rue Morgue

Part One



PARIS! IN PARIS IT WAS, IN THE summer of 1840. There I first met that strange and interesting young fellow, August Dupin.

Dupin was the last member of a **well-known** family, a family which had once been rich and famous; he himself, however, was far from rich. He cared little about money. He had enough to buy the most necessary things of life — and a few books; he did not **trouble** himself about the rest. Just books. With books he was happy.

We first met when we were both trying to find the same book. As it was a book which few had ever heard of, this chance brought us together in an old bookstore. Later we met again in the same store. Then again in another bookstore. Soon we began to talk.

I was deeply interested in the family history he told me. I was surprised, too, at how much and how widely he had read; more important, the force of his busy mind was like a bright light in my soul. I felt that the friendship of such a man would be for me **riches** without price. I therefore told him of my feelings toward him, and he agreed to

come and live with me. He would have, I thought, the joy of using my many fine books. And I would have the pleasure of having someone with me, for I was not happy alone.

We passed the days reading, writing and talking. But Dupin was a lover of the night, and at night, often with only the light of the stars to show us the way, we walked the streets of Paris, sometimes talking, sometimes quiet, always thinking.

I soon noticed a special reasoning power he had, an unusual reasoning power. Using it gave him great pleasure. He told me once, with a soft and quiet laugh, that most men have windows over their hearts; through these he could see into their souls. Then, he surprised me by telling what he knew about my own soul; and I found that he knew things about me that I had thought only I could possibly know. His manner at these moments was cold and distant. His eyes looked empty and far away, and his voice became high and nervous. At such times it seemed to me that I saw not just Dupin, but two Dupins — one who **coldly** put things together, and another who just as coldly took them apart.

One night we were walking down one of Paris's long and dirty streets. Both of us were busy with our thoughts. Neither had spoken for perhaps fifteen minutes. It seemed as if we had each forgotten that the other was there, at his side. I soon learned that Dupin had not forgotten me, however. Suddenly he said:

"You're right. He is a very little fellow, that's true, and he would be more successful if he acted in lighter, less serious plays."

"Yes, there can be no doubt of that!" I said.

At first I saw nothing strange in this. Dupin had agreed with me, with my own thoughts. This, of course, seemed to me quite natural. For a few seconds I continued walking, and thinking; but suddenly I realized that Dupin had agreed with something which was only a thought. I had not spoken a single word. I stopped walking and turned to my friend. "Dupin," I said, "Dupin, this is beyond my understanding. How could you know that I was thinking of…." Here I stopped, in order to test him, to learn if he really did know my **unspoken** thoughts.

"How did I know you were thinking of Chantilly? Why do you stop? You were thinking that Chantilly is too small for the plays in which he acts."

"That is indeed what I was thinking. But, tell me, in Heaven's name, the method — if method there is — by which you have been able to see into my soul in this matter."

"It was the fruit-seller."

"Fruit-seller!? I know no fruit-seller."

"I mean the man who ran into you as we entered this street — it may have been ten or fifteen minutes ago, perhaps less."

"Yes; yes, that's true, I remember now. A fruit-seller, carrying a large basket of apples on his head, almost threw me down. But I don't understand why the fruit-seller should make me think of Chantilly — or, if he did, how you can know that."

"I will explain. Listen closely now:

"Let us follow your thoughts from the fruit-seller to the **play-actor**, Chantilly. Those thoughts must have gone like this: from the fruit-seller to the **cobblestones**, from the cobblestones to stereotomy, and from stereotomy to Epicurus, to Orion, and then to Chantilly.

"As we turned into this street the fruit-seller, walking very quickly past us, ran against you and made you step on some cobblestones which had not been put down **evenly**, and I could see that the stones had hurt your foot. You spoke a few angry words to yourself, and continued walking. But you kept looking down, down at the cobblestones in the street, so I knew you were still thinking of stones.

"Then we came to a small street where they are putting down street stones which they have cut in a new and very special way. Here your face became brighter and I saw your lips move. I could not doubt that you were saying the word stereotomy, the name for this new way of cutting stones. It is a strange word, isn't it? But you will remember that we read about it in the newspaper only yesterday. I thought that the word stereotomy must make you think of that old Greek writer named Epicurus, who wrote of something he called **atoms**; he believed that the world and everything in the heavens above are made of these atoms.

"Not long ago you and I were talking about Epicurus and his ideas, his atoms, ideas which Epicurus wrote about more than 2,000 years ago. We were talking about how much those old ideas are like today's ideas about the earth and the stars and the sky. I felt sure that you would look up to the sky. You did look up. Now I was certain that

I had been following your thoughts as they had in fact come into your mind. I too looked up, and saw that the group of stars we call Orion is very bright and clear tonight. I knew you would notice this, and think about the name Orion.

"Now follow my thoughts carefully. Only yesterday, in the newspaper, there was an article about the actor Chantilly, an article which was not friendly to Chantilly, not friendly at all. We noticed that the writer of the article had used some words taken from a book we both had read. These words were about Orion. So I knew you would put together the two ideas of Orion and Chantilly. I saw you smile, remembering that article and the hard words in it.

"Then I saw you stand straighter, as tall as you could make yourself. I was sure you were thinking of Chantilly's size, and especially his height. He is small; he is short. And so I spoke, saying that he is indeed a very little fellow, this Chantilly, and he would be more successful if he acted in lighter, less serious plays."

I will not say that I was surprised. I was more than surprised; I was **astonished**. Dupin was right, as right as he could be. Those were in fact my thoughts, my unspoken thoughts, as my mind moved from one thought to the next. But if I was astonished by this, I would soon be more than astonished.

One morning this **strangely** interesting man showed me once again his unusual reasoning power. We heard that an old woman had been killed by unknown persons. The killer, or the killers, had cut her head off — and escaped into the night. Who was this killer, this **murderer**? The police had no answer. They had looked everywhere and found nothing that helped them. They did not know what to do next. And so — they did nothing.

But not Dupin. He knew what to do.

The Murders in the Rue Morgue

Part Two

IT WAS IN PARIS IN THE SUMMER of 1840 that I met August Dupin. He was an unusually interesting young man with a busy, **forceful** mind. This mind could, it seemed, look right through a man's body into his soul, and **uncover** his **deepest** thoughts. Sometimes he seemed to be not one, but two people — one who coldly put things together, and another who just as coldly took them apart.

One morning, in the heat of the summer, Dupin showed me once again his special reasoning power. We read in the newspaper about a terrible killing. An old woman and her daughter, living alone in an old house in the Rue Morgue, had been killed in the middle of the night:

> *Paris, July 7, 1840. In the early morning today the people in the western part of the city were awakened from their sleep by cries of terror, which came, it seemed, from a house in the street called the Rue Morgue. The only persons living in the house were an old woman, Mrs. L'Espanaye, and her daughter. Several neighbors and a policeman ran toward the house, but by the time they reached it the cries had stopped. When no one answered their calls, they forced the door open.*

As they rushed in they heard voices, two voices; they seemed to come from above. The group ***hurried*** *from room to room, but they found nothing until they reached the fourth floor. There they found a door that was* ***firmly*** *closed, locked, with the key inside. Quickly they forced the door open, and they saw spread before them a bloody* ***sickening*** *scene — a scene of horror!*

The room was in the wildest possible order — broken chairs and tables were lying all around the room. There was only one bed, and from it everything had been taken and thrown into the middle of the floor. There was blood everywhere, on the floor, on the bed, on the walls. A sharp knife covered with blood was lying on the floor. In front of the ***fireplace*** *there was some long gray hair, also bloody; it seemed to have been pulled from a human head. On the floor were four pieces of gold, an* ***earring****, several objects made of silver, and two bags containing a large amount of money in gold. Clothes had been thrown around the room. A box was found under the bed covers. It was open, and held only a few old letters and papers.*

There was no one there — or so it seemed. Above the fireplace they found the dead body of the daughter; it had been put up into the opening where the smoke escapes to the sky. The body was still warm. There was blood on the face, and on the neck there were dark, deep marks which seemed to have been made by strong fingers. These marks surely show how the daughter was killed.

After hunting in every part of the house without finding anything more, the group went outside. Behind the building they found the body of the old woman. Her neck was almost cut through, and when they tried to lift her up, her head fell off.

The next day the newspaper offered to its readers these new facts:

The Murders in the Rue Morgue. —Paris, July 8, 1840. The police have talked with many people about the terrible killings in the old house on the Rue Morgue but nothing has been learned to answer the question of who the killers were.

Pauline Dubourg, a ***washwoman****, says she has known both of the dead women for more than three years, and has washed their clothes during that period. The old lady and her daughter seemed to love each other* ***dearly****. They always paid her well. She did not know where their money came from, she said. She never met anyone in the house. Only the two women lived on the fourth floor.*

Pierre Moreau, a ***shopkeeper****, says Mrs. L'Espanaye had bought food at his shop for nearly four years. She owned the house and had lived in it for more than six years. People said they had money. He never saw anyone enter the door except the old lady and her daughter, and a doctor eight or ten times, perhaps.*

Many other persons, neighbors, said the same thing. Almost no one ever went into the house and Mrs. L'Espanaye and her daughter were not often seen.

Jules Mignaud, a banker, says that Mrs. L'Espanaye had put money in his bank, beginning eight years before. Three days before her death she took out of the bank a large amount of money, in gold. A man from the bank carried it for her to her house.

Isidore Muset, a policeman, says that he was with the group that first entered the house. While he was going up the stairs he heard two voices, one low and soft, and one hard, high, and very strange — the voice of someone who was certainly not French, the voice of a ***foreigner****. Spanish perhaps. It was not a woman's voice. He could not understand what it said. But the low voice, the softer voice, said, in French, "My God!"*

Alfonso Garcia, who is Spanish and lives on the Rue Morgue, says he entered the house but did not go up the stairs; he is nervous and he was afraid he might be ill. He heard the voices. He believes the high voice was not that of a Frenchman. Perhaps it was English; but he doesn't understand English, so he is not sure.

William Bird, another foreigner, an Englishman, says he was one of the persons who entered the house. He has lived in Paris for two years. He heard the voices. The low voice was that of a Frenchman, he was sure, because he heard it say, in French, "My God!" The high voice was very loud. He is sure it was not the voice of an Englishman, nor the voice of a Frenchman. It seemed to be that of an Italian. It might have been a woman's voice. He does not understand Italian.

Mr. Alberto Montani, an Italian, was passing the house at the time of the cries. He says that they lasted for about two minutes. They were screams, long and loud, terrible, ***fearful*** *sounds. Montani, who speaks Spanish but not French, says that he also heard two voices. He thought both voices were French. But he could not understand any of the words spoken.*

The persons who first entered the house all agree that the door of the room where the daughter's body was found was locked on the inside. When they reached the door everything was quiet. When they forced the door open they saw no one. The windows were closed and firmly locked on the inside. There are no steps that someone could have gone down while they were going up. They say that the openings over the fireplace are too small for anyone to have escaped through them. It took four or five people to pull the daughter's body out of the opening over the fireplace. A careful search was made through the whole house. It was four or five minutes from the time they heard the voices to the moment they forced open the door of the room.

Paul Dumas, a doctor, says that he was called to see the bodies soon after they were found. They were in a horrible condition, badly marked and broken. Such results could not have come from a woman's hands, only from those of a very powerful man. The daughter had been killed by strong hands around her neck.

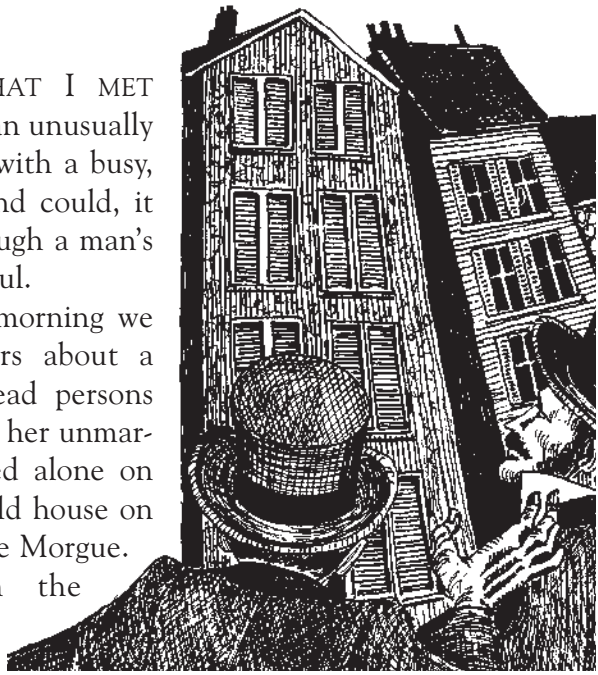
The police have learned nothing more than this. A killing as strange as this has never before happened in Paris. The police do not know where to begin to look for the answer.

When we had finished reading the newspaper's account of the murders neither Dupin nor myself said anything for a while. But I could see in his eyes that cold, empty look which told me that his mind was working busily. When he asked me what I thought of all this, I could only agree with all Paris. I told him I considered it a very difficult problem — a mystery, to which it was not possible to find an answer. No, no, said Dupin.

"No, I think you are wrong. A mystery it is, yes. But there must be an answer. Let us go to the house and see what we can see. There must be an answer. There must!"

The Murders in the Rue Morgue

Part Three



IT WAS IN PARIS THAT I MET August Dupin. He was an unusually interesting young man with a busy, forceful mind. This mind could, it seemed, look right through a man's body into his deepest soul.

One hot summer morning we read in the newspapers about a terrible killing. The dead persons were an old woman and her unmarried daughter, who lived alone on the fourth floor of an old house on the street called the Rue Morgue. Someone had taken the daughter's neck in his powerful fingers and pressed with fearful strength until her life was gone. Her mother's body was found outside, behind the house, with the head nearly cut off. The knife with which she was killed was found, however, in the room, on the floor.

Several neighbors ran to the house when they heard the women's cries of fear. As they ran up to the fourth floor they heard two other voices. But when they reached the room and broke down the door they found no living person in the room. Like the door, the two

windows were firmly closed, locked on the inside. There was no other way that the killer could have got in or out of the room.

The Paris police did not know where to begin to look for the answer. I told Dupin that it seemed to me that it was not possible to learn the answer to the mystery of these killings. No, no, said Dupin.

"No; I think you are wrong. A mystery it is, yes. But there must be an answer. We must not judge what is possible just by what we have read in the newspapers. The Paris police work hard and often get good results; but there is no real method in what they do. When something more than simple hard work is needed, when a little real method is needed, the police fail. Sometimes they stand too near the problem. Often, if a person looks at something very closely he can see a few things more clearly, but the shape of the whole thing escapes him.

"There must be an answer! There must! Let us go to the house and see what we can see. I know the head of the police, and he will allow us to do so. And this will be interesting and give us some pleasure."

I thought it strange that Dupin should believe we would get pleasure out of this. But I said nothing.

It was late in the afternoon when we reached the house on the Rue Morgue. It was easily found for there were still many persons — in fact, a crowd, standing there looking at it. Before going in we walked all around it, and Dupin carefully looked at the **neighboring** houses as well as this one. I could not understand the reason for such great care.

We came again to the front of the house and went in. We went up the stairs into the room where the daughter's body had been found. Both bodies were there. The police had left the room as they had found it. I saw nothing beyond what the newspaper had told us. Dupin looked with great care at everything, at the bodies, the walls, the fireplace, the windows. Then we went home.

Dupin said nothing. I could see the cold look in his eyes which told me that his mind was working, working busily, quickly. I asked no questions.

Dupin said nothing until the next morning, when he came into my room and asked me suddenly if I had not noticed something especially strange about what we saw at the house on the Rue Morgue. I replied: "Nothing more than we both read in the newspaper."

"Tell me, my friend. How shall we explain the horrible force, the unusual strength used in these murders? And whose were the voices that were heard? No one was found except the dead women; yet there was no way for anyone to escape. And the wild condition of the room; the body which was found head down above the fireplace; the terrible broken appearance of the body of the old lady, with its head cut off; these are all so far from what might be expected that the police are standing still; they don't know where to begin.

"These things are unusual, indeed; but they are not deep mysteries. We should not ask, 'What has happened?' but 'What has happened that has never happened before?' In fact, the very things that the police think cannot possibly be explained are the things which will lead me to the answer. Indeed, I believe they have already led me to the answer."

I was so surprised I could not say a word. Dupin looked quickly at the door. "I am now waiting for a person who will know something about these murders, these wild killings. I do not think he did them himself. But I think he will know the killer. I hope I am right about this. If I am, then I expect to find the whole answer, today. I expect the man here — in this room — at any moment. It is true that he may not come; but he probably will."

"But who is this person? How did you find him?"

"I'll tell you. While we wait for this man we do not know — for I have never met him — while we wait, I will tell you how my thoughts went." Dupin began to talk. But it did not seem that he was trying to explain to me what he had thought. It seemed that he was talking to himself. He looked not at me, but at the wall.

"It has been fully proved that the voices heard by the neighbors were not the voices of the women who were killed. Someone else was in the room. It is therefore certain that the old woman did not first kill her daughter and then kill herself. She would not have been strong enough to put her daughter's body where it was found; and the manner of the old lady's death shows that she could not have caused it herself. A person can kill himself with a knife, yes. But he surely cannot cut his own head almost off, then drop the knife on the floor and jump out the window. It was murder, then, done by some third person — or persons. And the voices heard were the voices of these

persons. Let us now think carefully about the things people said about those voices. Did you notice anything especially strange in what was told about them?"

"Well, yes. Everybody agreed that the low voice was the voice of a Frenchman; but they could not agree about the high voice."

"Ah! That was what they said, yes; but that was not what was so strange about what they said. You say you have noticed nothing that makes their stories very different from what might have been expected. Yet there was something. All these persons, as you say, agreed about the low voice; but not about the high hard voice. The strange thing here is that when an Italian, an Englishman, a Spaniard, and a Frenchman tried to tell what the voice was like, each one said it sounded like the voice of a foreigner. How strangely unusual that voice really must have been! Here are four men from four big countries, and not one of them could understand what the voice said; each one gave it a different name.

"Now, I know that there are other countries in the world. You will say that perhaps it was the voice of someone from one of those other lands — Russia, perhaps. But remember, not one of these people heard anything that sounded like a separate word."

Here Dupin turned and looked into my eyes.

"This is what we have learned from the newspaper. I don't know what I have led you to think. But I believe that in this much of the story there are enough facts to lead us in the one and only direction to the right answer. What this answer is, I will not say…not yet. But I want you to keep in mind that this much was enough to tell me what I must look for when we were in that house on the Rue Morgue. And I found it!"

The Murders in the Rue Morgue

Part Four

MURDERERS HAD COME TO THE OLD HOUSE ON THE STREET CALLED the Rue Morgue! Murderers had come and gone and left behind the dead bodies of an old woman and her daughter. The daughter's body was in the bedroom on the fourth floor. The old woman was lying outside, behind the house, her head almost cut off; but the knife which killed her was up in the bedroom, on the floor. The door and the windows were all firmly closed, locked on the inside; there was no way for anyone to go in or out. Voices had been heard. One voice was speaking in French; the other voice had not spoken even one word that anyone could understand. But there was no one in the room when police arrived.

This much we had learned from the newspapers, my friend Dupin and I. Interested by it, we had gone to look at the house and the bodies. Dupin was now explaining to me what he had learned there.

"That is what we learned from the newspapers. Please remember it; for that much was enough to tell me what I must look for when we were in that house on the Rue Morgue. And I found it!

"Let us now take ourselves again, in our thoughts, to the room where the murders were done. What shall we first look for? The way the murderers escaped. All right. We agree, I am sure, that we do not have to look for anything outside of nature, for anything not having a real form, a body. The killers were not spirits; they were real. They could not go through the walls. Then how did they escape? There is only one way to reason on that subject, and it must lead us to the answer. Let us look, one at a time, at the possible ways to escape. It is

clear that the killers were in the room where the daughter was found. From this room they must have escaped. How?

"At first I saw no way out. It had been necessary for the neighbors to break down the door in order to enter the room. There was no other door. The opening above the fireplace is not big enough, near the top, for even a small animal. The murderers therefore must have escaped through one of the windows. This may not seem possible. We must prove that it is possible.

"There are two windows in the room. Both of them, you will remember, are made of two parts; to open the window one must lift up the bottom half. One of these windows is easily seen; the lower part of the other is out of sight behind the big bed. I looked carefully at the first of these windows. It was firmly closed, **fastened**, like the door, on the inside. To keep the window closed, to fasten it, someone had put a strong iron nail into the wood at the side of the window in such a way that the window could not be raised. At least it seemed that the nail held the window closed. The nail was easy to see. There it was. And the people who discovered the killings used their greatest strength and could not raise the window. I, too, tried to raise the window and could not.

"I went to the second window and looked behind the bed at the lower half of the window. There was a nail here, too, which held the window closed. Without moving the bed, I tried to open this window also, and again I could not do so.

"I did not stop looking for an answer, however, because I knew that what did not seem possible must be proved to be possible. The killers — or perhaps I should say, the killer, for I am almost certain there was only one — the killer escaped through one of these windows. Of this I felt certain. After the murderer had left the bedroom he could have closed the window from the outside; but he could not have fastened it again on the inside. Yet anyone could see the nails which held the windows **tightly** closed. This was the fact that stopped the police. How could the murderer put the nail back in its place?"

"Perhaps — perhaps if you pulled out the nail…."

"Yes! That is just what I thought. Two things seemed clear: first, there had to be something wrong with the idea that the nails were holding the windows closed. I didn't know what was wrong. Something

was. Second, if it was not the nails which were holding the windows closed, then something else was holding them closed, something hard to see, something hidden.

"I went back to the first window. With great effort I pulled out the nail. Then I again tried to raise the window. It was still firmly closed. This did not surprise me. There had to be a hidden lock, I thought, inside the window. I felt the window carefully with my fingers. Indeed, I found a button which, when I pressed it, opened an inner lock. With almost no effort I raised the window.

"Now I knew that the killer could close the window from outside and the window would lock itself. But there was still the nail. Carefully, I put the nail back into the hole from which I had taken it. Then I pressed the button and tried to raise the window. I could not. The nail also was holding the window closed!"

"Then…then the murderer could not possibly have gone out the window."

"He could not have gone out that window. Therefore, he must have escaped through the other window. The other window was also held closed by a nail. But I knew I must be right. Although no one else had looked carefully at the window behind the bed, I went to it and tried to see whether the two windows were in some way different. The nail in the second window looked the same as the one I had just seen. I moved the bed so that I could look closely. Yes. There was a button here, too. I was so sure I was right that without touching the nail I pressed the button and tried to raise the window. Up it went!

"As the window went up it carried with it the top part of the nail, the head. When I closed the window the head of the nail was again in its place. It looked just as it had looked before. I took the head of the nail in my fingers and it easily came away from the window. I saw that the nail had been broken. But when I put the nail head back in its place, the nail again looked whole.

"What seemed to be not possible we have proved to be possible. The murderer indeed escaped through that window. I could now see, in my mind, what had happened.

"It was a hot summer night. When the murderer first arrived he found that window open, open to let some of the fresh night air come in. Through the open window the murderer went in and came

out again. As he came out he closed the window, perhaps with a purpose to do so, perhaps by chance. The special lock inside the window held the window firmly closed. The nail only seemed to be holding it closed. And that which was possible looked not possible."

Dupin had been talking not to me, it seemed, but to himself. His cold eyes seemed to see only what was in his own mind. Now he stopped and looked straight at me. His eyes were now hard and bright. And I understood that using his unusual reasoning power to find the answer to those bloody murders was giving Dupin great pleasure!

At first I could think only of this. Then I said: "Dupin — the windows are on the fourth floor, far above the ground. Even an open window…."

"Yes. That is an interesting question: how did the murderer go from the window down to the ground? Once I was quite certain that the murderer had in fact gone through that window the rest was not so hard to know. And the answer to this question told me still more about who the murderer was!

"When you and I first came to the house on the Rue Morgue we walked around the house. At that time I noted a long, thin metal pole which went from the top of the building to the ground — a **lightning rod**, put there to carry down to the ground a charge of electricity that might come out of the clouds during a bad summer storm. Here, I thought, is a way for someone to go up or down the wall, and then to go in or out the window. He would have to be very strong. Although certain animals could easily go up the pole, not every man could do it — only a man with very special strength and special training. This told me more about what the murderer was like. But I still had the question: who?"

The Murders in the Rue Morgue

Part Five

THAT UNUSUAL FRENCHMAN, AUGUST Dupin, was still explaining to me how he found the answer to the question of who murdered the two women in the house on the Rue Morgue. We now knew that it was indeed possible for the killer to go in and again out one of the windows and still leave them both firmly closed, locked on the inside. And I agreed with Dupin when he said that only someone with very special strength and training could have gone up the lightning rod on the side of the house and thus entered the window. But who the murderer was, we still did not know.

"Let us look again," said Dupin, "at that room on the fourth floor. Let us now go back, in our minds, to the room we saw yesterday. Consider its appearance. Clothes had been thrown around the room; yet it seemed that none had been taken. The old woman and her daughter almost never left the house. They had little use for many clothes. Those that were found in the room were as good as any they had. If the killer took some, why didn't he take the best — or take all? And why would he take a few clothes and leave all the money? Nearly the whole amount brought from the bank was found, in bags, on the floor.

"I want you therefore to forget the idea in the minds of the police, the idea that a desire for money was what they call the **motive**, the reason for the murders. This idea rose in their minds when they heard how the money was brought to the house three days before the killings. But this is only what we call a **coincidence** — two things happening at the same time, but only by chance and not because of some cause, some cause that brought them together. Coincidences happen to all of us every day of our lives. If the gold was the reason for the murders, the killer must have been quite a **fool** to forget and leave it there.

"No. I don't think the desire for money was the reason for the killings. I think that there was no reason for these killings…except, perhaps, fear.

"Now let us look at the murders themselves. A girl is killed by powerful hands around her neck, then the body is placed in the opening over the fireplace, head down. No murders we usually hear about are like this. There is something here that does not fit our ideas of human actions, even when we think of men of the most terrible kind. Think, also, of the great strength which was necessary to put the body where it was found. The strength of several men was needed to pull it down!

"There are other signs of this fearful strength. In front of the fireplace some gray human hair was lying, thick pieces of it, pulled from the head of the old woman. You saw the hair on the floor yourself, and you saw the blood and skin with it. You know, and I know, that great force is necessary to pull out even twenty or thirty hairs at one time. A much greater force was needed to pull out hundreds of hairs at one time. Also, the head of the old lady was cut almost completely from the body. Why? To kill a woman with a knife it is not necessary to cut her head off!!

"If, now, added to all these things, we add also the condition of the room, we have put together the following ideas: strength more than human; **wildness** less than human; a murder without reason; horror beyond human understanding; and a voice which made no sound that men could understand. What result, then, have you come to? What have I helped you to see?"

A cold feeling went up and down my back as Dupin asked me the question. "A man…someone who has lost his mind," I said. "A **madman**!! A madman!! Only a madman could have done these murders!"

"I think not. In some ways your idea is a good one. But madmen are from one country or another. Their cries may be terrible, but they are made of words, and some of the words can be understood.

"Here! Look! Look at this hair. I took it from the fingers of the old woman. The hair of a madman is not like this. Tell me what you think it is."

"Dupin! This hair is…this hair is not human hair!!"

"I did not say that it is. But, before we decide this matter, look at the picture I had made here on this piece of paper. It is a picture of the marks on the daughter's neck. The doctors said these marks were made by fingers. Let me spread the paper on the table before us. Try to put your fingers, all at the same time, on the picture, so that your hand and its fingers will fit the picture of the marks on the daughter's neck."

"I cannot!"

"No. But perhaps we are not doing this in the right way. The paper is spread out on the table; the human neck is round. Here is a piece of wood about as big as the daughter's neck. Put the paper around it and try again. Go on! Try!"

I tried to put my fingers around the piece of wood, as if it were the girl's neck! But still my hand was not large enough to equal the marks left by the killer. "Dupin! These marks were made by no human hand!"

"No. They were not. I am almost certain that they were made by the hand of an **orangutan**, one of those man-like animals that live in the wild forests. The great size, the strength, the wildness of these animals are well known. Now. Look in this book by Cuvier. Read. Look at the picture."

I did so, and at once I knew that Dupin was right in everything he said. The color of the hair…the size of the hand…the terrible strength…the wildness of the killings…those sounds which were a voice but were not words…everything fit nicely in its place.

No, not everything. "Dupin!" I said. "There were two voices. Whose was the second voice?"

"The second voice! Yes! Remember: we decided that only someone with a very special kind of strength could have gone up the lightning rod, up the side of the house to the window on the fourth floor — perhaps an animal, perhaps a strong man from a **circus**, perhaps a **sailor**. We know now that one of the voices was the voice of an animal, an orangutan. The other was the voice of a man. This voice spoke only two words; they were "My God!" spoken in French.

"Upon those two words I have placed my hopes of finding a full answer to this horrible question. The words were an expression of horror. This means that a Frenchman knew about these murders. It is possible — indeed it is **probable** — that the Frenchman himself did not help the orangutan to kill. Perhaps the animal escaped from him, and he followed it to the house on the Rue Morgue. He could not have caught it again. It must still be free somewhere in Paris.

"I will not continue with these guesses — for I cannot call them more than that. If I am right, and if the Frenchman did not himself help with the killings, I expect him to come here. Read this. I paid to have this put in the newspaper."

I took the newspaper and read the following:

> CAUGHT — *Early in the morning of the seventh of this month: a very large orangutan. The owner, who is known to be a sailor, may have the animal again if he can prove it is his.*

"But, Dupin. How can you know that the man is a sailor?"

"I do not know it. I am not sure of it. I think the man is a sailor. A sailor could go up that pole on the side of the house. Sailors travel to strange, **faraway** places where such things as orangutans can be got. If I am right….

"Think for a moment! The sailor will say to himself: 'The animal is valuable. Why shouldn't I go and get it? The police do not know the animal killed two women. And clearly somebody knows I am in Paris. If I do not go to get the animal, they will ask why. I don't want anyone to start asking questions about the animal. So I will go and get the orangutan and keep it where no one will see it, until this trouble has passed.' This, I believe, is how the sailor will think. But listen! I hear a man's step on the stairs."

Dupin had left the front door of the house open, and the visitor entered without using the bell. He came several steps up the stairs, then stopped. We heard him go down again. Dupin was moving toward the door when we again heard the stranger coming up. He did not turn back a second time, but came straight to the door of our room.

In a strong, warm, friendly voice, Dupin said:

"Come in, my friend! Come in!"

Slowly the door opened, and in came — a sailor!

The Murders in the Rue Morgue

Part Six

MY FRIEND DUPIN WAS NOW CERTAIN THAT THE MURDERS IN THE Rue Morgue had been done by a wild animal of the **jungle**, the man-like animal known as an orangutan. The animal had escaped from its owner, he thought; and the owner was probably a sailor. He had put a notice in the newspaper that the man who owned the orangutan could have it again if he came to our house to get it. Now, as the owner came to our door, we were both wondering if that man would, as Dupin guessed, be a sailor.

Yes. The man who entered was indeed a sailor. He was a large man, and strong. He carried a big, heavy piece of wood, but no gun. He said to us, in French: "Good evening."

"Sit down, my friend. I suppose you have come to ask about the orangutan. A very fine animal. I have no doubt that it is a very valuable animal. How old do you think it may be?"

"I have no way of guessing how old it is, but it can't be more than four or five years old. Have you got it here?"

"No, no. We have no place for it here. You can get it in the morning. Of course you can prove it is yours?"

"Yes. Yes, I can."

"I wish I could keep it."

"I would like to have it. I…of course I will pay you for finding and keeping the animal. Anything…anything within reason."

"Well…That is very fair, indeed. Let me think. What shall I ask for? I know! Let this be my pay. Tell me everything you know about the murders in the Rue Morgue."

As quietly as he had spoken Dupin walked to the door, locked it, and put the key in his coat. At the same time he took a gun out of his coat and placed it on the table.

The sailor's face had become red. He jumped to his feet and reached for his stick of wood, but in the next moment he fell back into his chair, **trembling**. His face became quite white, bloodless. He spoke not a word. His eyes were closed.

"My friend, you must not be afraid. We are not going to hurt you. I know very well that you yourself are not the killer. But it is true that you know something about him — or about it. From what I have already said, you must know that I have ways of learning about the matter — ways you could never have dreamed of.

"Now, I know that you yourself have done nothing wrong. You didn't even take any of the money. You have no reason to be afraid to talk and to tell the truth. It is a matter of honor for you to tell all you know. And you know who the killer is."

"So help me God! I…I'll tell you all I know about this, all I know — but I don't expect you to believe one half of what I say — not one half. Still, I didn't kill anyone, and I'll tell the whole story if I die for it. It was that animal! The orangutan!…

"About a year ago our ship **sailed** to the Far East, to the island of Borneo. I had never before seen Borneo. The forest, the jungle, was thick with trees and other plants, and hot and wet and dark. But we went — a friend and I — we went into that forest — for pleasure. There we saw this orangutan, a big animal. But we were two, and we caught it. We took it with us on the ship. Soon, however, my friend died, and the animal was mine. But it was very strong and caused a lot of trouble.

"In the end I brought it back to Paris with me. I kept it in my house, in my own house, carefully locked up, so the neighbors could not know about it. The animal had cut one foot badly while on the ship. I thought…I thought that as soon as it got well I would sell it. I was certain it was of great value. And it was so much trouble to keep! I wanted to sell it, soon.

"The night of the murders, very late, I came home and found the animal in my bedroom. It had got free, I don't know how. It held a knife in its hands, and was playing with it. I was afraid. I didn't know what to do. When it saw me it jumped up, ran out of the room and down the stairs. There it found an open window and jumped into the street. I followed, never far behind, although I had no hope of catching it again. The animal, with the knife still in its hand, stopped often to look back at me. But before I could come near enough to even try to catch it, the animal always started to run again. It seemed to be playing with me.

"It was nearly morning, but the streets were still dark, and quiet. We passed the back of a house in the Rue Morgue. The animal looked up and saw a light in the open window of a room high above. It was the only lighted window in sight. The animal saw the metal pole, went up it easily and quickly, and jumped into the room. All this didn't take a minute.

"I didn't know what to do. I didn't know what I could do. I followed the animal. I too went up the pole. As I am a sailor it was easy for me. But the open window was far from the pole and I was afraid to try to jump. I could see into the room, however, through the other window, which was closed.

"The two women were sitting there, with their backs to the windows. Who can guess why they were not sleeping at that hour of the night? A box was in the middle of the floor. The papers which had been in the box were lying around on the floor. The women seemed to be studying some of these. They did not see the animal, which was just standing there, watching, the knife still in one hand. But the old woman heard it and turned her head and saw the animal there, knife in hand, and then…then I heard the first of those terrible cries.

"When the animal heard the old woman's cry it caught her by the hair and slowly moved the knife before her face. The daughter, filled

with terror, fell to the floor and remained there without moving, her eyes closed. The old woman continued to cry for help, screaming with fear. I think the animal now was as afraid as the old woman was. With terrible force it pulled out a handful of hair. And when the woman, covered with blood, tried to run from it, the animal caught her again by the hair and with one move of its arm it nearly cut her head from her body. Throwing down the body, the animal turned and saw that the daughter was moving, watching it with horror. With fire in its eyes it rushed to the girl, put its powerful fingers around her neck, and pressed them firmly there until she died.

"When the girl stopped moving, the animal dropped her body to the floor and looked up. It saw my face in the window. It began to run around the room, quickly, without purpose. It jumped up and down, breaking the chairs, pulling the bed to pieces. Suddenly it stopped and took the body of the daughter and, as if to hide it, with terrible strength it put the body up above the fireplace, where it was found. It threw the old woman out the window.

"All this time I was hanging from the pole, filled with horror. It seemed I had lost the power to move. But when I saw the animal coming toward the window with the old woman's body, my horror became fear. I went quickly down — I almost fell down the pole, and I ran. I didn't look back. I ran! Oh, my God! My God!"

The Chief of the police was not happy that the answer to the mystery of the killings had been found by someone who was not a policeman. He said that people should keep to their own business. "Let him talk," said Dupin.

"Let him talk. He'll feel better for it. And he's a good fellow. But he makes things less simple than they really are. Still, people call him **skillful**, and even wise. I think they say this because of the way he explains, carefully, fully, something which is not here, or there, or anywhere; and says, 'Not possible!' about something which is there before his eyes."

The Tell-Tale Heart

IT'S TRUE! YES, I HAVE BEEN ILL, very ill. But why do you say that I have lost control of my mind, why do you say that I am mad? Can you not see that I have full control of my mind? Is it not clear that I am not mad? Indeed, the illness only made my mind, my feelings, my senses stronger, more powerful. My sense of hearing especially became more powerful. I could hear sounds I had never heard before. I heard sounds from heaven; and I heard sounds from hell!

Listen! Listen, and I will tell you how it happened. You will see, you will hear how healthy my mind is.

It is impossible to say how the idea first entered my head. There was no reason for what I did. I did not hate the old man; I even loved him. He had never hurt me. I did not want his money. I think it was his eye. His eye was like the eye of a **vulture**, the eye of one of those terrible birds that watch and wait while an animal dies, and then fall upon the dead body and pull it to pieces to eat it. When the old man looked at me with his vulture eye a cold feeling went up and down my

back; even my blood became cold. And so, I finally decided I had to kill the old man and close that eye forever!

So you think that I am mad? A madman cannot plan. But you should have seen me. During all of that week I was as friendly to the old man as I could be, and warm, and loving.

Every night about twelve o'clock I slowly opened his door. And when the door was opened wide enough I put my hand in, and then my head. In my hand I held a light covered over with a cloth so that no light showed. And I stood there quietly. Then, carefully, I lifted the cloth, just a little, so that a single, thin, small light fell across that eye. For seven nights I did this, seven long nights, every night at midnight. Always the eye was closed, so it was impossible for me to do the work. For it was not the old man I felt I had to kill; it was the eye, his Evil Eye.

And every morning I went to his room, and with a warm, friendly voice I asked him how he had slept. He could not guess that every night, just at twelve, I looked in at him as he slept.

The eighth night I was more than usually careful as I opened the door. The hands of a clock move more quickly than did my hand. Never before had I felt so strongly my own power; I was now sure of success.

The old man was lying there not dreaming that I was at his door. Suddenly he moved in his bed. You may think I became afraid. But no. The darkness in his room was thick and black. I knew he could not see the opening of the door. I continued to push the door, slowly, softly. I put in my head. I put in my hand, with the covered light. Suddenly the old man sat straight up in bed and cried, "Who's there??!"

I stood quite still. For a whole hour I did not move. Nor did I hear him again lie down in his bed. He just sat there, listening. Then I heard a sound, a low cry of fear which escaped from the old man. Now I knew that he was sitting up in his bed, filled with fear; I knew that he knew that I was there. He did not see me there. He could not hear me there. He felt me there. Now he knew that Death was standing there.

Slowly, little by little, I lifted the cloth, until a small, small light escaped from under it to fall upon — to fall upon that vulture eye! It was open — wide, wide open, and my anger increased as it looked straight at me. I could not see the old man's face. Only that eye, that

hard blue eye, and the blood in my body became like ice.

Have I not told you that my hearing had become unusually strong? Now I could hear a quick, low, soft sound, like the sound of a clock heard through a wall. It was the beating of the old man's heart. I tried to stand quietly. But the sound grew louder. The old man's fear must have been great indeed. And as the sound grew louder my anger became greater and more painful. But it was more than anger. In the quiet night, in the dark silence of the bedroom my anger became fear — for the heart was beating so loudly that I was sure some one must hear. The time had come! I rushed into the room, crying, "Die! Die!" The old man gave a loud cry of fear as I fell upon him and held the bedcovers **tightly** over his head. Still his heart was beating; but I smiled as I felt that success was near. For many minutes that heart continued to beat; but at last the beating stopped. The old man was dead. I took away the bedcovers and held my ear over his heart. There was no sound. Yes. He was dead! Dead as a stone. His eye would **trouble** me no more!

So I am mad, you say? You should have seen how careful I was to put the body where no one could find it. First I cut off the head, then the arms and the legs. I was careful not to let a single drop of blood fall on the floor. I pulled up three of the boards that formed the floor, and put the pieces of the body there. Then I put the boards down again, carefully, so carefully that no human eye could see that they had been moved.

As I finished this work I heard that someone was at the door. It was now four o'clock in the morning, but still dark. I had no fear, however, as I went down to open the door. Three men were at the door, three officers of the

police. One of the neighbors had heard the old man's cry and had called the police; these three had come to ask questions and to search the house.

I asked the policemen to come in. The cry, I said, was my own, in a dream. The old man, I said, was away; he had gone to visit a friend in the country. I took them through the whole house, telling them to search it all, to search well. I led them finally into the old man's bedroom. As if playing a game with them I asked them to sit down and talk for a while.

My easy, quiet manner made the policemen believe my story. So they sat talking with me in a friendly way. But although I answered them in the same way, I soon wished that they would go. My head hurt and there was a strange sound in my ears. I talked more, and faster. The sound became clearer. And still they sat and talked.

Suddenly I knew that the sound was not in my ears, it was not just inside my head. At that moment I must have become quite white. I talked still faster and louder. And the sound, too, became louder. It was a quick, low, soft sound, like the sound of a clock heard through a wall, a sound I knew well. Louder it became, and louder. Why did the men not go? Louder, louder. I stood up and walked quickly around the room. I pushed my chair across the floor to make more noise, to cover that terrible sound. I talked even louder. And still the men sat and talked, and smiled. Was it possible that they could not hear??

No! They heard! I was certain of it. They knew! Now it was they who were playing a game with me. I was suffering more than I could bear, from their smiles, and from that sound. Louder, louder, louder! Suddenly I could bear it no longer. I pointed at the boards and cried, "Yes! Yes, I killed him. Pull up the boards and you shall see! I killed him. But why does his heart not stop beating?! Why does it not stop!?"

The Cask of Amontillado

FORTUNATO HAD HURT ME A thousand times and I had suffered quietly. But then I learned that he had laughed at my proud name, Montresor, the name of an old and honored family. I promised myself that I would make him pay for this — that I would have **revenge**. You must not suppose, however, that I spoke of this to anyone. I would make him pay, yes; but I would act only with the greatest care. I must not suffer as a result of taking my revenge. A **wrong** is not made right in that manner. And also the wrong would not be made right unless Fortunato knew that he was paying and knew who was forcing him to pay.

I gave Fortunato no cause to doubt me. I continued to smile in his face, and he did not understand that I was now smiling at the thought of what I planned for him, at the thought of my revenge.

Fortunato was a strong man, a man to be feared. But he had one great weakness: he liked to drink good wine, and indeed he drank much of it. So he knew a lot about fine wines, and **proudly** believed that he was a trained judge of them. I, too, knew old wines well, and

I bought the best I could find. And wine, I thought, wine would give me my revenge!

It was almost dark, one evening in the spring, when I met Fortunato in the street, alone. He spoke to me more **warmly** than was usual, for already he had drunk more wine than was good for him. I acted pleased to see him, and I shook his hand, as if he had been my closest friend.

"Fortunato! How are you?"

"Montresor! Good evening, my friend."

"My dear Fortunato! I am indeed glad that I have met you. I was just thinking of you. For I have been tasting my new wine. I have bought a full **cask** of a fine wine which they tell me is Amontillado. But…."

"Amontillado! Quite impossible."

"I know. It does not seem possible. As I could not find you I was just going to talk to Luchresi. If anyone understands wines it is Luchresi. He will tell me…."

"Luchresi? He does not know one wine from another!"

"But they say he knows as much about wines as you know."

"Ho! — Come. Let us go."

"Go where?"

"To your **vaults**. To taste the wine."

"No, my friend, no. I can see that you are not well. And the vaults are cold and wet."

"I do not care. Let us go. I'm well enough. The cold is nothing. Amontillado! Someone is playing games with you. And Luchresi! Ha! Luchresi knows nothing about wines, nothing at all."

As he spoke, Fortunato took my arm, and I allowed him to **hurry** me to my great stone **palace**, where my family, the Montresors, had lived for centuries. There was no one at home. I had told the **servants** that they must not leave the palace, as I would not return until the following morning and they must care for the place. This, I knew, was enough to make it certain that they would all leave as soon as my back was turned.

I took down from their places on the wall two **brightly** burning lights. I gave one of these to Fortunato and led him to a wide doorway. There we could see the stone steps going down into the darkness.

Asking him to be careful as he followed, I went down before him, down under the ground, deep under the old walls of my palace. We came finally to the bottom of the steps and stood there a moment together. The earth which formed the floor was cold and hard. We were entering the last resting place of the dead of the Montresor family. Here too we kept our finest wines, here in the cool, dark, still air under the ground.

Fortunato's step was not sure, because of the wine he had been drinking. He looked **uncertainly** around him, trying to see through the thick darkness which pushed in around us. Here our brightly burning lights seemed weak indeed. But our eyes soon became used to the darkness. We could see the bones of the dead lying in large piles along the walls. The stones of the walls were wet and cold.

From the long rows of bottles which were lying on the floor, among the bones, I chose one which contained a very good wine. Since I did not have anything to open the bottle with, I struck the stone wall with it and broke off the small end. I offered the bottle to Fortunato.

"Here, Fortunato. Drink some of this fine Medoc. It will help to keep us warm. Drink!"

"Thank you, my friend. I drink to the dead who lie sleeping around us."

"And I, Fortunato — I drink to your long life."

"Ahh! A very fine wine, indeed! But the Amontillado?"

"It is farther on. Come."

We walked on for some time. We were now under the river's bed, and water fell in drops upon us from above. Deeper into the ground we went, past still more bones.

"Your vaults are many, and large. There seems to be no end to them."

"We are a great family, and an old one. It is not far now. But I can see you are **trembling** with the cold. Come! Let us go back before it is too late."

"It is nothing. Let us go on. But first, another drink of your Medoc!"

I took up from among the bones another bottle. It was another wine of a fine quality, a De Grâve. Again I broke off the neck of the

bottle. Fortunato took it and drank it all without stopping for a breath. He laughed, and threw the empty bottle over his shoulder.

We went on, deeper and deeper into the earth. Finally we arrived at a vault in which the air was so old and heavy that our lights almost died. Against three of the walls there were piles of bones higher than our heads. From the fourth wall someone had pulled down all the bones, and they were spread all around us on the ground. In the middle of the wall was an opening into another vault, if I can call it that — a little room about three feet wide, six or seven feet high, and perhaps four feet deep. It was hardly more than a hole in the wall.

"Go on," I said. "Go in; the Amontillado is in there."

Fortunato continued to go forward, uncertainly. I followed him immediately. Soon, of course, he reached the back wall. He stood there a moment, facing the wall, surprised and wondering. In that wall were two heavy iron rings. A short chain was hanging from one of these and a lock from the other. Before Fortunato could guess what was happening, I closed the lock and chained him **tightly** to the wall. I stepped back.

"Fortunato," I said. "Put your hand against the wall. You must feel how the water runs over it. Once more I ask you, please, will you not go back? No? If not, then I must leave you. But first I must do everything I can for you."

"But…But the Amontillado?"

"Ah, yes, yes indeed; the Amontillado."

As I spoke these words I began to search among the bones. Throwing them to one side I found the stones which earlier I had taken down from the wall. Quickly I began to build the wall again, covering the hole where Fortunato stood trembling.

"Montresor! What are you doing!?"

I continued working. I could hear him pulling at the chain, shaking it **wildly**. Only a few stones remained to put in their place.

"Montresor! Ha-ha. This is a very good joke, indeed. Many times will we laugh about it — ha-ha — as we drink our wine together — ha-ha."

"Of course. As we drink the Amontillado."

"But is it not late? Should we not be going back? They will be expecting us. Let us go."

"Yes. Let us go."

As I said this I lifted the last stone from the ground.

"Montresor! For the love of God!!"

"Yes. For the love of God!"

I heard no answer. "Fortunato!" I cried. "Fortunato." I heard only a soft, low sound, a half-cry of fear. My heart grew sick; it must have been the cold. I hurried to force the last stone into its position. And I put the old bones again in a pile against the wall. For half a century now no human hand has touched them. May he rest in peace!

Glossary

(Meanings explained here are only for the use of the words in this book.)

alike (adv) very similar, almost the same

astonish (v) to surprise or amaze someone

atom (n) the smallest part of a chemical element that can exist and still be that element. If we break an iron atom into its smaller parts, the parts are no longer iron.

beam (n) a strong piece of wood or concrete used to support the roof of a house

belongings (n) things that someone owns

bleeding (n) blood that is coming out of a cut or wound

brightly (adv) with a lot of light; shiny

cask (n) a large wooden container used to store alcohol, water, or other liquids

cellar (n) a room under a building, often used to keep supplies

changeable (adj) likely to change

circus (n) a traveling show of horses, wild animals, performers, etc.

cobblestone (n) a round stone used for paving streets. One can still find cobblestone streets in many old cities.

coincidence (n) happening at the same time by chance or without planning

coldly (adv) behaving or acting calmly without being disturbed by emotion

coldness (n) a feeling of cold because of low temperature; a lack of warmth; a lack of friendliness or other emotion

costume (n) clothing that is used to dress up as a character, often meant to conceal a person's identity

covering (n) a cloth used to cover a wall

damp (adj) not dry; wet but not very wet

dare (v) to have the courage or be brave enough to do something

deadly (adv) able to cause death or kill

dearly (adv) greatly or with much love

decay (n) a process that begins after death when something begins to break down, rot, and smell very bad

decaying (adj) bad smelling and rotten because of being dead for a long time

deepest (adj) as deep as is possible, the furthest down

delight (n) great pleasure or happiness

delighted (adj) with great pleasure, very pleased or excited

delightful (adj) very pleasing or beautiful

destroyer (n) something or someone that ruins and destroys

distantly (adv) being far away

earring (n) a piece of jewelry worn on the ear

earthly (adj) possible in the real world, of the earth

evenly (adv) of the same height, size, amount; in a smooth or equal manner

ever-remembered (adj) remembered forever or always

faraway (adj) not near, distant, remote

fasten (v) to close something tightly or securely

fearful (adj) causing fear or terror

fireplace (n) a place in the wall of a room where wood is burned to warm the room

firmly (adv) tightly, completely, securely

fool (n) a person who behaves recklessly or stupidly

footstep (n) a step a person takes while walking

forceful (adj) powerful; strong

foreigner (n) a person from another country

frighten (v) to cause fear

frightening (adj) scary or terrible, causing fear

gambler (n) a person who often plays games that involve winning or losing money

ghastly (adj) very white, pale; like a ghost

gloom (n) heavy sadness; sadness without hope

gloomy (adj) very sad, without hope; dark

goldfish (n) a small gold or orange-colored fish, often kept as a pet

grave (n) a hole in the ground where dead bodies are buried

grave-clothes (n) the clothing put on a dead person

graveyard (n) a place where dead people are buried

hanging (n) a decoration put on the wall like a piece of cloth or art

horseback (n) the place on a horse where a rider sits; traveling by riding a horse

hotly (adv) strongly; intensely

hotness (n) a personality that easily gets excited; often impatient and may be easily angered

humanly (adv) within the ability of humans; given the qualities of human beings

hurry (v) to move in a rushed manner

hurried (adj) in a quick, rushed way

icy (adj) very cold, like ice; unfriendly

inn (n) a place where a person can pay to sleep and eat, a hotel

innkeeper (n) a person who owns or cares for an inn

jungle (n) a tropical environment where wild animals like monkeys live

lighten (v) to make or become lighter and brighter, to make less dark; to make less heavy

lighthearted (adj) happy and without worry

lightning rod (n) a thin rod of metal reaching above a building and connected to the earth. It is a conductor to carry the lightning to the ground so that it will not strike the building.

likeness (n) similarity or sameness

long-continued (adj) drawn out, carried on

low-hanging (adj) something that hangs, that is noticeably close to the ground

madman (n) a crazy person, a person who acts without reason

masquerade (n) a party where the people wear masks to cover their faces

masquerader (n) a person who wears a mask at a party

motive (n) the reason a person does something. Usually a person has a motive or a reason for committing a crime.

murderer (n) a person who kills another person

mysterious (adj) strange, unusual, containing questions which cannot be answered

mysteriously (adv) in a strange or unusual way

neighboring (adj) next to or very near, close by

nervously (adv) feeling uncertain about the future; being afraid because of doubt

nervousness (n) the feeling of being uncertain about the future, worried and unhappy

never-ending (adj) without a finish or end

never-to-be-forgotten (adj) remembered forever

noticeable (adj) easily seen or observed

openly (adv) in a direct way, without an attempt to hide or conceal

orangutan (n) a type of primate like a monkey, orange in color

palace (n) a large, beautiful building where royalty usually live

pet (v) to stroke or touch gently, usually to touch an animal like a dog

plain (adj) undecorated, simple; obvious or easily seen

plainly (adv) obvious, easily seen

play-actor (n) a person who acts in a play or drama

playground (n) a place where children play outside, usually on equipment like swings or slides

probable (adj) likely

proudly (adv) with a sense of honor for something well done

revenge (n) the act of paying back a wrong or injury

riches (n) money or valuable items

richness (n) the state of having a lot of money or things of great value

rightly (adv) in a correct way or manner

ruler (n) someone who is in charge, like a king or leader

sail (v) to pilot or steer a boat that has sails

sailor (n) a person who works on a ship or boat

schoolfellow (n) a male person who attends school

secret (adj) unknown or unseen by others, hidden

secretly (adv) done in a way unknown or unseen by others

seize (v) to quickly capture or take hold of

servant (n) a person who is paid to work in someone else's house doing things like cooking and cleaning

sharpness (n) the quality of being sharp or of keen intellect

shine (v) to reflect light

shining (adj) reflecting light, bright

shopkeeper (n) a person who manages a small store or shop

sicken (v) to make physically ill or sick

sickening (n) the state of becoming physically ill

sickening (adj) making physically ill or sick

sickly (adj) not healthy, showing signs of physical illness

skillful (adj) with talent or special ability

spirit-quieting (adj) calming, tranquil

stillness (n) without movement, the state of not moving

stormy (adj) with bad weather such as thunderstorms or lightning

strangely (adv) in a manner that is not normal, in an odd way

strangeness (n) something that is not normal, may be bothersome or odd

sunrise (n) the time when the sun comes up in the morning

sweetness (n) the quality of smelling sweet, like a flower or candy

sword (n) a long piece of metal with a sharp pointed edge, used for fighting

thoughtful (adj) with care and consideration

tightly (adv) securely; snug and close to the body

tremble (v) to physically shake because of fear

trembling (adj) shaking because of fear

trembling (n) the act of shaking because of fear

trouble (v) to make worried or bothered

troubled (adj) worrisome or bothersome

turning (n) change of direction

uncertainly (adv) without sureness or exact direction

uncover (v) to remove a cover in order to show what is underneath

unhealthy (adj) not well, sick; not good for the health

unspoken (adj) not said out loud

uplifted (adj) raised or turned upward

useless (adj) unable to do what needs to be done

uselessness (n) the state of being unable to do what needs to be done, incapable

vault (n) a large room underground where things are stored (such as wine, valuable things, and sometimes the bodies of dead people)

violet (adj) a color very similar to purple

vulture (n) a large bird that feeds on meat

warmly (adv) with affection, showing closeness or kindness

warmth (n) a feeling of welcome and affection, friendliness

washwoman (n) a female who cleans clothing

watchful (adj) always observing or paying close attention to actions

weaken (v) to make something weak or not strong

weakly (adv) with little physical strength

well-known (adj) recognized by many people

well-shaped (adj) with a visually pleasing form

wholly (adv) completely or entirely

widen (v) to make the space between two objects larger

wildly (adv) in an uncontrolled way

wildness (n) something that is uncontrolled or not tame

worldly (adj) something related to natural life, not spiritual life

wrong (n) an action that is not good, evil, or bad

wrongdoing (n) an action that may be evil or bad, legally or morally

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